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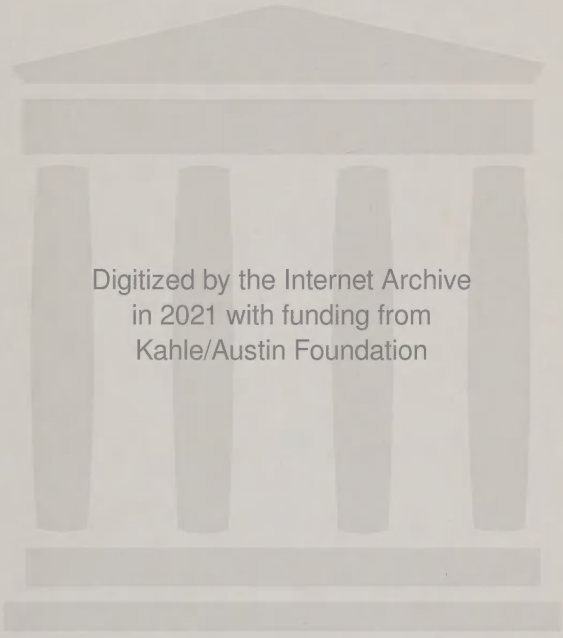

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# Spiritual Life

## SERMONS

*PREACHED IN THE CHAPEL OF LINCOLN'S INN*

BY

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## SERMON I.

### The Law Given by Moses.

"The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."—John i. 17.

In this concise, but singularly comprehensive statement, St. John sets before us the essential characteristics of the two great manifestations of God in the world — the manifestation of God *to* man by the declaration of His will, and the announcement of His attributes through the mediation of Moses; the manifestation of God *in* man, the perfect revelation of His nature, the innermost mysteries of His love, in the Person of Jesus Christ. At present I will confine my remarks to the circumstances under which the law was given by Moses, and to the great characteristics of that law, reserving for another occasion a discussion, necessarily most imperfect, yet needful for our immediate object, of the crowning manifestation in Christ.

With regard to the giving of the law, it would be worse than useless, having no bearing upon our spiritual life, to enter upon the discussion of matters which belong to the province of the archæologist and critic. The results of such discussion ever have varied, and ever will vary, according to the fundamental principles from

which the enquirer starts. For my own part, I assume, without any hesitation, that in the account of the transactions at Sinai we have the testimony of Moses, and that he was writing and acting under the control and inspiration of God. When I say I assume this, I must remind you that I do but assume that for which we have the authority of St. John in the text, and of no less clear and positive declarations of our Lord Himself. I would not assume it had I the shadow of a doubt as to the truth of the statement, were I not satisfied that I hold that conviction in common with most of my hearers; did I not feel that, if that fact were not admitted, any speculations as to the origin of the accounts placed before us in Exodus, and as to the meaning of its representations, would be without importance or significance in a religious point of view. I may indeed refer to what appear to me absolutely conclusive proofs adduced in my Introduction to Exodus, that the whole book, and more especially that portion of it with which we are at present concerned, could not possibly have been the production of a Palestinian Jew, but must have been written by a man in the very peculiar position of Moses, who combined the traditional knowledge of the old Hebrews with a personal and thorough acquaintance with the customs, language, and contemporary literature of Egypt. But in fact the only proof of the inspiration of the Pentateuch which reaches the inmost spirit, and satisfies the demands of the heart, is that which is supplied by the subject-matter of the narrative, by the incomparable grandeur of the transactions which it records, and by the consistency of the

doctrines which it sets forth, with those attributes of God which are most distinctly recognized by the conscience of man.

Looking first at the outward circumstances which marked the promulgation of God's law, we find them described in language which makes an ineffaceable impression upon the mind. Every portion of Scripture bears witness to the impression which it made upon Psalmist and Prophet, upon the hearts of the people and the spirits of their teachers. The thunderings of Sinai reverberate throughout the New Testament, in no part more awfully than in the Revelation given to the Church by the last and greatest of her inspired teachers, St. John the Divine. In our attempts to realize so far as may be possible the scenery and imagery of the transactions, we may not undervalue the help afforded us by travellers who have carefully explored and graphically described the localities. Under their guidance we may traverse the intricate passes through which the Israelites penetrated into the central district of the peninsula. We follow them as they debouch into that level plain, the plain which, as a scientific explorer states, "is of all places in the world best suited for the event; the plain from which the precipitous height of Sinai rises in its lonely grandeur, 'the very image of the mount which might be touched,' from which the mighty voice might be heard far over its stillness, widened as it is at that point to its utmost extent by the confluence of all the contiguous valleys." We may learn from the Ordnance Survey how accurately each detail of the scenery coincides with the sacred narrative,

leaving on the unbiassed mind an irresistible conviction of its reality. But, thankful as we are for such accounts, we must not let them interfere with the spiritual impression which that narrative is intended to produce. We must not allow the frequent allusions to natural phenomena to withdraw our attention from the solemn attestation of Holy Scripture that the thunders and the lightnings, the thick cloud on the mount, and the voice of the trumpet, unlike all earthly voices, at which the people trembled exceedingly, though not without natural analogies, were yet truly supernatural intimations of a Theophany, or manifestation of the Lord God. The single-hearted believer, who, under the teaching of prophets and apostles, loses all consciousness of merely natural agencies in an intense consciousness of the Divine presence, comes infinitely nearer to the truth than the curious reader to whom that presence is almost lost sight of in the discussion of its accompaniments. Would we gain the true impression, let us take the words of the inspired writer himself to heart, and endeavour not merely to realize the circumstantial details of the transaction, but to comprehend the transcendant importance of the moral and spiritual truths which it presents, an importance recognized not merely by Christians, but to a great extent even by men of thought, who have simply viewed it with reference to its bearings upon the development of the human mind, and upon the progress of true civilization in the world.

Contemplating the transaction under this aspect alone, wholly regardless, if not of its spiritual, yet of its supernatural character, two very remarkable men,

Ewald and Salvador, representing severally the noblest tendencies of modern thought among rationalistic Hebrews and Christians, speak in the strongest language of the incomparable grandeur of the conception; attributing it to the genius of Moses, they not unnaturally acknowledge in him the loftiest and most original intellect of ancient history. They could not indeed fail to discern, in this event, the critical epoch in the annals of that nation which alone retained its central principle of life from a period preceding by long ages the earliest dawn of European civilization, which has transmitted that principle, enlarged and developed, but substantially unchanged, to the nations which are now unquestionably the masters of the world. They recognize in the outward accompaniments of the transaction a vivid bodying forth of the fact that then and there truths of infinite import were impressed at once and for ever upon the heart of man; that in a true sense Jehovah, the Life and Lord of the universe, met the people who were destined to be, what all history proves them to have been up to the time of Christ's coming, the conservators of the most fundamental principles of religious, moral, nay, of political and social truth. We are not now concerned with the inquiry how Salvador can reconcile the record of Exodus with the nobleness and integrity of the man to whom, in his grand work on the institutions of Moses, he attributes the conception and the execution of the most astounding transaction in history; or how Ewald can persuade himself that a narrative so thoroughly one in principle and so circumstantial in details could have

been elaborated by Israelites during the period of struggle and confusion which intervened between the conquest of Palestine and the union of the people under a native prince. What we are really concerned with, what it seems to me really important to note, is the impression which, notwithstanding an invincible prejudice against supernatural intervention, the Scripture history of this event has made upon great representative minds, capable of appreciating the forces which have most effectually determined the movements of the human spirit, and the destinies of the whole world.

But now, as Christians accepting God's word in its integrity, let us consider the general scope and bearings of the law given through the mediation of Moses, confining our attention at present to the Decalogue, in which its entire principle is contained. In order to appreciate, however imperfectly, its special and incomparable importance, we should keep two points steadily before our minds. We should note the essential difference between the doctrinal or moral teaching of the Decalogue, so to speak its theology and ethics, and what we know of the systems of ancient heathenism; we should also consider it in reference to modern developments of human action and human thought. On the one hand, we see at once that it stood out in the strongest antagonism to the forms which it found predominant in every part of the world with which it came into contact; on the other hand, we see that so far from being, like all systems of human invention, superseded by later developments of human thought,

it ever has stood, as it doubtless ever will stand, in advance of them all, unchanged and unchangeable, a fixed standard by which man may ever measure his progress or deterioration, an embodiment of principles which our Divine Teacher came not to abrogate or modify, but to exemplify by His life, to vindicate by His death, and by His living Spirit to impress upon the conscience of every Christian man.

Consider the first table of the Decalogue from this point of view; consider its positive and its negative bearings—what it enjoins, what it condemns. The very first commandment might indeed seem to convey a truth, if not self-evident, yet too much in accordance with natural reason to need special enforcement. Yet what does history tell us with one voice? Not that the truth was wholly unknown, but that from East to West, from the most barbarous to the most civilized nations, it was buried, overwhelmed under a vast and ever increasing growth of debasing superstitions; that although it had once been recognized, although traces of its recognition are found everywhere, underlying the polytheism of the Aryans, the Egyptians, nay, even of the Turanians—a point which comes out daily more distinctly as researches go wider and deeper into archæology and philology—that although in the early patriarchal age one God was worshipped under the name of El, or El Shaddai, a name of divine origin and spiritual significance, yet when all Israel stood before God on Sinai, no nation on earth worshipped one God as the Creator and Lord of the universe. Observe this well. Worship was addressed everywhere to a

multitude of deities, *nowhere* to the God Whom yet men indistinctly or unconsciously acknowledged as the source of all existences. And what, I ask, does the very latest inquiry teach us as to modern tendencies of merely human thought? Does it not tell us of a fatal, far-spread apostasy of intellect? Does it not tell us that men of high and cultivated intelligence hold that polytheism, with all its immorality and superstitions, has been, and for aught they know may again be, a system more favourable than monotheism to the development of man's various faculties? Does it not tell us that those noble spirits, who, under circumstances which peculiarly call for our sympathy, are now struggling against the advancing currents of materialism, not having the support of faith in an objective revelation, struggle at the best in alternate fits of hope and desperation? Does it not tell us that he who takes his stand on this central truth stands alone apart from the tendencies which the unbelieving intellect holds to be triumphant? And can we, without treason to our God, hesitate to declare that he stands in advance of the spirit of *this* age? stands on a summit which they only can reach who, trusting in God's own word, are uplifted by God's own Spirit? "I am the Lord thy God; I Jehovah am thy God." There is the truth on which other truths rest. Take that to heart, not as the word of Moses, transcendant as we may regard him in spiritual intelligence, but as the word of the Eternal Father, and you may listen unmoved to the Babel of conflicting speculations, trusting to Him who will not leave any one who puts himself

under His care without an adequate disclosure of His attributes and His will.

But, it may be asked, do the other commandments on this table bear the same character of majesty and necessity? What shall we say as to the attribute of jealousy? What but that its announcement was a matter of the most absolute necessity? necessary to make man feel that God will endure no tampering with His truth, no transfer of His inalienable attributes to other objects, no forms of idolatrous worship, which as all experience proves corrupt and degrade the spirit of man. Do we not know that it took centuries to teach Israel this lesson, that it was not thoroughly learned until the terrible penalties of idolatry predicted by Moses had been repeatedly inflicted? Do we not know that, utterly irrational, all but unintelligible as such aberrations appear, they recur in every age; that idolatry, ever and anon assuming some new disguise, exercises a mysterious fascination; that it finds apologists in men of subtle intellect, who pride themselves on superiority to vulgar prejudices, and that no small portion of Christendom has been contaminated by it, to the grievous deterioration of the mass of the people, and producing a violent recoil in men of intellect, causing, we could almost say justifying, their very general alienation from the Church of their Fathers? And if our own Church be so entirely exempt from the danger that we can scarcely realize its force, this may be attributed mainly to the effect produced upon the mind of our people by the constant iteration of the second commandment, in which it is declared that the

jealousy inseparable from true love, caring above all things for the purity of its object, is an essential attribute of our God.

Just so far as we attend to these principles we are able to appreciate the importance of the other two commandments on this table. Hallow God's Name! Are we now in advance of this law? Does it not supply a test which few of us can apply without painful misgivings to our own habitual use of that great Name? And then surely if any portion of the Decalogue is peculiarly the outcome of love, of all foreseeing wisdom, it is that which, cutting with a double edge, on the one side demands six days for the work of life, vindicating thus for man's use a large portion of time which in heathen, aye and in Christian, lands is wasted in riotous orgies or superstitious festivities; and on the other side claims absolutely one seventh day for rest from exhausting toil, and for the development of our spiritual nature by an absolute devotion of our thoughts and feelings to God.

Let us now glance rapidly at the second table of the law. Observe the first principle which it lays down. All relative duties have their root in the relations of man to man as members of one family; the first duty being that of children to their parents. Now, I do not say that this fundamental principle was overlooked by any ancient people. It is too deeply engrafted in our nature, too strongly sustained by every motive of interest and affection, to fall into neglect. But the place which it occupies in the Decalogue is unique. I find no exact counterpart in Eastern or Western codes. And

when we look abroad, when we look at home, we see ample reason for recognizing the wisdom and the necessity of the prominence given to this commandment. We certainly cannot assert that our own age is in advance of it—an age in which all earnest men are unanimous in deploring the relaxation of those bonds, the neglect of those obligations, which are the foundation of all legitimate authority, the main security for the preservation of order, the peace, and progress of mankind.

The commandments which follow are remarkable specially for two points. They differ from all the codes of heathendom in this respect: they are absolutely unmixed with any secondary, local, or merely temporary interests. Still more so in the fact that they do not present a single point to which the most captious moralist could object. It is quite true that each separate precept, with the exception however of the last, finds a place in every code of ancient and modern legislation. A claim for originality on this ground would be tantamount to an assertion that the moral law does not appertain to the very essence of our rational nature. But it is also true that in all ancient codes the laws which were intended to protect life, chastity, property, and character, were intermingled with others which produce a sensation of horror or repugnance, or at the best demand the exercise of a calm and condescending spirit of toleration for errors, which we may deem inseparable from the earliest efforts of human reason in dealing with the gravest problems of moral and social life. If you would estimate the absolute singularity of the Decalogue in this

freedom from all alloy of human error, compare it with the codes of the Greeks, the ten tables of the Romans, with the Egyptian code, a very interesting one in the 125th chapter of the so-called Ritual, with the laws of Manu in twelve books, translated by Sir W. Jones, nay, with the jurisprudence of ages far advanced in all other phases of civilization. If you would appreciate its permanent necessity, compare these few precepts with the so-called code of honour recognized by men of the world, a code which under certain very common conditions has actually enjoined murder, ignored chastity, and tolerated or encouraged breaches of each and all of the other commandments—the *Devil's Decalogue*, as it has been not unfitly styled; nay, compare our Decalogue with the movements in your own heart which it condemns. Ask yourselves whether, understood in the sense maintained by all Christian expositors, all those precepts do not rebuke past or present practices; nay, whether in their most simple and literal sense they do not involve the necessity of extreme caution and moral earnestness? Do we ever mingle in society without witnessing breaches of the commandment to bear no false witness against our neighbour? Do we ever examine our own hearts, without a recognition of involuntary, or of wilful and inexcusable, transgression of that commandment in which St. Paul finds the ultimate principle of morality, the test and the discoverer of sinfulness? When do we listen seriously to that tenth commandment without a consciousness that in order to satisfy its plain demands we need a thorough renovation —that in it we hear "the word of God, quick and power-

ful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"?

Most truly the law given by Moses was a manifestation of God to man—a manifestation of His attributes, a manifestation of His will. Most truly as St. Paul, the great preacher of justification by faith, declares, *that* law is holy, the commandment holy and just and good. It needs no transformation in itself to meet the changes in man's feelings, or in the development of his intellect. What is requisite is a transformation in its object, in ourselves, such transformation as can be effected only by "the grace and truth" which came by Jesus Christ.

## SERMON II.

### Grace and Truth in Jesus Christ.

"The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."—John i. 17.

In discussing the first clause of this text, I endeavoured on Sunday last to show the Divine origin of the Mosaic law, its permanent and incomparable excellence, and its bearings upon the conscience and life of Christians. I noticed the recognition of its characteristic principles by our Saviour, Who declared "till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." No apostle speaks more strongly of its spirituality, its holiness, the reasonableness, and the necessity of its requirements, than St. Paul, to whom the special duty was assigned of preaching the great doctrine of justification through faith. It would be easy to adduce passages from each of the writers of the New Testament to the same effect. No disciple uses more definite and impressive language on this subject than St. John. He tells us that "sin is the transgression of the law," and that he who wilfully committeth sin forfeits all claim to be a child of God.

In what then does the essential distinction between

the law and the gospel consist? Not in the origin of either; for the law given by Moses was given to Moses by God. Not, if we listen to our true teachers, Christ and the apostles, in the clearness or spirituality of either, so far as regards the exposition of God's will, but in this: the law given by Moses presents itself to us from without; it demands an obedience which conscience acknowledges to be its due; it tests our will and our powers, the strength and weakness of our nature; it pronounces condemnation on us as one and all falling short of its requirements; whereas the grace which penetrates and remoulds the heart with all its desires and affections, and the truth, which is the manifestation of the Divine nature itself, became living realities—not merely realities in themselves, but realities to us, at once intelligible and attractive—when they were embodied in the person, exemplified by the life, and impressed upon the heart of man by the Spirit, of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In order to bring out these points more distinctly, I will ask you to look carefully at the words used by St. John in this text. They are remarkable for precision and fulness of meaning. Bengel, of all commentators the one most specially suited to men of disciplined intelligence, who prefer concise, well-weighed statements to tedious discussions of secondary points, says in his note on this passage, "No philosopher employs words, and observes their distinctions more accurately, than St. John," and that most specially in the introductory verses which set forth his fundamental doctrines. We find in the first place a contrast, which

it is by no means easy to represent in English, between the two verbs ἐδόθη, "was given," and ἐγένετο, which is rendered "came" in our version. The first word is of course equally clear in both languages; but consider how much it involves. The law, notwithstanding the imperfectness of its operation—an imperfectness which, as St. Paul is careful to tell us, was wholly owing to the moral weakness of those whom it addressed—was still a gift, a boon of inestimable worth; a gift from God to man, a manifestation of His attributes and of His will. The word ἐγένετο however is inadequately rendered. Our version gives us perhaps the best single word which could be used, when it tells us that grace and truth *came* by Jesus Christ; but that word *came* does not exhaust, nor does it exactly represent, the meaning of the Greek. Transition from one state or condition to another, whether of essence or of relation, is involved in ἐγένετο. It tells us that before the coming of Christ grace and truth were not to man what they became to him afterwards, what they became, fully and effectually, in and by the person of Jesus Christ. Now we cannot say that grace and truth were unknown under the previous dispensation; in fact it is, to say the least, extremely probable that St. John expressly uses both words in reference to the declaration of God, the manifestation of His essential characteristics which was vouchsafed to Moses. In Exodus xxxiv. we read, "The Lord descended in the cloud, and proclaimed the name" (that is, the full import of the name), Jehovah .... The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abounding in goodness

and truth." Grace and truth, as objects of contemplation, as motives for devout worship and loving obedience, could not be declared more plainly. What then was the change? First, a change in the manner of manifestation. Manifested to Moses himself, as we are told, only in part, God was manifested to the Israelites not directly and personally, but through that great seer's declaration. But goodness and truth, grace and truth, became, so to speak, visible, palpable, brought within the sphere of human sympathies, working upon human affections, and thus fully manifested, in the person of Jesus. We have indeed here in another form the doctrine stated by St. John: "The Word was made (ἐγένετο) flesh, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." That text tells us that the Word Incarnate was full of grace and truth; this tells us that the grace and truth which are the essential principles of the Godhead came to us, became present realities to us, capable of being realized by us, in and through Him Whom now, having thus prepared us for the full disclosure, now for the first time, in that deepest and most sublime of all doctrinal statements, which justified the great fathers of the Church in calling him by the special name Theologus,* St. John presents to our contemplation by the name Jesus Christ.

Guided by this declaration, we have to contemplate the person of our Lord under two aspects—as the embodiment, the living realization, first of *grace*, then of *truth*. With regard to grace, our difficulty is not in

* θεολόγος. See Suicer, s. v.

the assertion, or even the demonstration of the fact, but in the selection of points which may enable us partly to appreciate that marvellous personality. You are well aware that, without referring to the writings of Christian apologists, it would be easy to show that grace, understood in a true and not wholly inadequate sense as the exhibition of a love without precedent or parallel, was a characteristic, was indeed the most prominent and unquestionable characteristic, of Jesus of Nazareth; that it was a quality unconsciously recognized by His opponents, one which gave Him immediate and irresistible influence over His followers, which presented to mankind a model that at once made itself felt far beyond the sphere of its immediate action, and within a few centuries awakened new sympathies, developed new principles of action, and completely changed the whole tone of human morals. These are points recognized fully, unreservedly, by men who avow themselves to be alien, not merely from the faith of the Christian Church, but from the principles which, as they assert, were held by the first followers of our Lord. Indeed, some of the most winning and beautiful traits of His humanity, His tenderness, His unspeakable sympathy with every form of physical and mental suffering, His utter abnegation of self, His marvellous condescension, His loving reception of broken-hearted outcasts, are dwelt upon with singular fulness, and with what we cannot doubt is a sincere and hearty appreciation, by men who stand foremost in their antagonism to our religious system in France, in Germany, and, as I have more than once had occasion

to notice, in England. Our Jesus, our dear Lord, cannot be known at all without drawing forth some feelings of admiration and affection, without being recognized as the very embodiment of grace. Still, for us Christians, whose first wish it must be to ascertain the doctrine of Scripture on this most fundamental of all questions, it is a very grave consideration how we are to understand St. John's assertion. It is a very true, and a very important statement, that in Jesus Christ we see the perfection, the ideal representation, of humanity. Behold the Man! is the first utterance won from the conscience when it is awakened to the perception of the human graces of the Redeemer. That view does in fact enable the careful thinker to realize what is meant by the appellation, the Son of man; undoubtedly it does prepare the way for the full recognition of the truth. But that truth itself, the ultimate truth, which St. John sets before us, is distinct from this. What it declares is, not merely that the man Jesus showed the affinity and nearness of a loving man to the loving God, but that God's innermost essential attribute of love was incarnate in Him; that, to use the most accurate words of the Nicene Creed—that Creed which is in the most special sense the voice of the Universal Church—Christ was, nay, Christ is, "God of god, Light of light, Very God of very god;" and that, again recurring to the old form in which Christian principles found expression, the personality of Christ is not human, but divine.

This may be called mere dogma, as though all distinctive Christian truths were not dogmas, resting on the

absolute authority of revelation, on the teaching of the Holy Ghost; it is however a most practical and essential truth. It simply condenses and presents in a succinct form the utterances of Holy Writ. It does but say, with St. John, that the Word which was with God, which was God, became man; it does but say, with St. Paul, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself; it does but say, with Christ Himself, that He was one (in essence) with the Father, and the Father with Him. It is a truth indispensable to us, if we would understand the absolute truth of the doctrine of the Old and of the New Testament. The law, as we said, was the expression of God's will, the declaration of His attributes. Those attributes, that will, nay, the very essence in which the attributes and will existed, were incarnate in Christ, and in Him became inseparably united with the substance of redeemed humanity. Keeping this truth distinctly before us, we discern at once the principles of agreement and difference in the first and second dispensations, in the law and the gospel. The law spoke to man, but spoke to him as above him and apart from him, commanding, menacing, or promising: whereas grace in the person of Christ spoke *in* man, as dwelling in man, as united with man, inviting, attracting, and diffusing itself by a most subtle and transforming influence, thus at once restoring man to the state of original likeness to God, and putting him again in possession of his lost privileges as the creature and child of God. The thunders of Sinai thus retain for us all their significance; but out of Sion God hath shined in perfect beauty upon those who contemplate

Him as revealed in the person of Christ. Hence the ground and justification of our worship of the Lord Jesus. We adore in Christ not the man in moral unity with God—under that aspect He does present Himself, but simply as an object for our imitation—nay, not man as a person in union with God, for thus we should lapse into the old Nestorian heresy, virtually ignoring the Incarnation; nor again, as man absorbed and lost in the Godhead, for we should then fall into the more subtle and not less dangerous heresy of the Monophysites; but in common with the whole body of Christians in the East and in the West, who, whether reformed or unreformed in other matters, in this firmly retain "the faith delivered once, and once for all, to the saints," we worship in Christ the Word of God—God the Word, the Giver of the law, presenting Himself to our consciences and to our hearts as the embodiment of grace and truth.

The same train of thought might be applied with equal force to the other proposition, that truth came to us in Christ; in other words, that truth revealed in Him became to us an intelligible reality. But it may be useful to consider this from another point of view, and inquire in what consisted the special peculiarity of our Lord as a teacher of moral and spiritual truth. That peculiarity we may find chiefly conspicuous in two characteristics, to which I called attention in reference to the Decalogue; the one being the recognition of all great truths which with more or less distinctness had previously been acknowledged by man's conscience, and inculcated by teachers of morality; the other being the

complete elimination of all the errors which, if not in every human system, certainly in every system which at that time was accepted, would seem to be inextricably blended with the truth. By any man conversant with the history of philosophy, the combination of these two characteristics would certainly be admitted to be a sufficient reason for placing any teacher by whom it should be exhibited in the very highest rank; of this I feel sure, that it is exclusively the characteristic of God's word fully made known by our Lord.

Now most of my hearers are aware that the recognition of every known moral truth has actually been held to constitute a valid argument against the independence and originality of His teaching. It has been held a point of considerable importance to show that certain maxims or sayings, remarkable for pregnancy and significance, are common not only to the Old and New Testaments, but to the early rabbinical writings, more especially to those which record sayings of Hillel, and his descendants the two Gamaliels, who for more than two centuries had a preponderating influence in the development of Jewish thought. Now, as you well know, I have never undervalued the good which is to be found in their system. The notice of the first Gamaliel, St. Paul's teacher, in the Acts of the Apostles, proves not only that he was held in esteem with all the people, but that he was well entitled to their esteem by soundness of judgment and delicacy of moral instinct. The accounts of Hillel, now generally known to students of the history of that age and country, cannot be read without leaving a conviction that he was a

thoroughly sincere and very earnest lover of truth. It would indeed have been strange had the constant study of God's word produced no such results; had the leaders of a people who, with all their faults, had for some ages shown a willingness to sacrifice all that men hold dear on earth for the sake of religion, been dull and unapprehensive in questions appertaining to morality. The Spirit of God did not forsake His people in the interval of struggle and of progress between their return from exile and the coming of His Son. They preserved, they applied ofttimes with singular aptness and force, the moral precepts, the sublime truths, in which they gloried as the most precious inheritance of Israel. So far from seeing in our Lord's adoption of any such maxims an indication of dependence, we should rather be surprised if any one maxim of real value had been overlooked by Him, had it not found its right place in His doctrine. He, the living Truth, at once the source and manifestation of truth, He, the eternal Word, Who lighteth every man coming into the world, claimed every declaration of truth as His own. It came from His Father; it was the gift of His Spirit.

Still, brethren, if any of you care to inquire further into this matter, you should keep these facts in mind. The actual teaching of Hillel and the Gamaliels is not recorded in any contemporary writings. There are few traces in Josephus or Philo of those elements which are akin to our Saviour's doctrine. We know their teaching only from the Talmud, of which the earliest portion was committed to writing some two centuries later than Hillel; the first compilation

was made by one of his descendants, a rabbi, Jehuda Hakkhodesh; *i.e.* the holy Jude, or, as we should say, St. Jude, who died at the end of the second century; and it is acknowledged by the ablest Hebrew critics that the mind of that man gave a strong colouring to the whole work, so much so indeed, that Grætz represents him as the true founder of the rabbinical school which he upholds in opposition to Christianity. Now it is impossible to say how far the sayings, forms of prayer, and moral maxims attributed to the older rabbis may, consciously or even unconsciously, so far as the compiler is concerned, have been modified and supplemented so as to give them greater weight and keener edge.

Two points I must notice, though it would require a special treatise to draw them out fully. The sayings attributed to Hillel, by far the most important in this inquiry, since he was of the generation immediately preceding the age of Christ, may be divided into two classes. By far the larger portion breathe a spirit altogether alien from that of the gospel; and it is certainly remarkable that the style of those sayings, both as regards the language and the mode of expression, is excessively obscure and archaic, whereas the few which closely resemble the words of Christ are free from provincialisms, and singularly clear and simple. No one can doubt that the former belong to Hillel, but the latter would scarcely bear the test of such criticism as is applied unsparingly to Christian writings. There is another point which it is important to observe, and I do not remember to have seen noticed. These say-

ings partly belong to what the Jews call Halacha, that is, maxims regulating all legal and ceremonial observances, the jurisprudence, so to speak, of the nation. Now all compilers were really careful to record these sayings accurately. They were well known, constantly applied in courts of justice, and were guarded by watchful and jealous observers; among them are certainly not found any of the sayings now in question. Other sayings stood on very different grounds; they belong to what is called the Aggada; that is, the popular, legendary, or purely ethical and spiritual teaching, in recording which the widest latitude was allowed. (Hence the common form in citing of a tradition ואיתימא, Ber. v. 1.) Among these you will find all the sayings which have the apparent stamp of Christian truths. Now when we remember the very close contact between the Palestinian Christians and their countrymen; when we bear in mind the fact that the Ebionites, who received all the discourses of our Lord in which those maxims are found, were not regarded as aliens from Israel, and that very many of them relapsed into Judaism, and undoubtedly had then great influence over their co-religionists, we naturally infer, what a closer examination draws out more and more distinctly, that no small portion of the ethical teaching of the Jews in the second century was derived, indirectly and it may be unwittingly, from the school of Christ. One thing is certain, at a very early time Hillel was upheld, as he is at this day by Grætz, Geiger, and other Jews and Judaizing Christians, as the rival of Christ, descended from David, and presenting the culminating type of Jewish excellence.

Be this as it may—the point, though interesting and, as I think, important, is by no means essential to my argument—the other fact to which I would specially bespeak attention is clear and conclusive. Errors of every kind, errors of interpretation, errors in the foundations of moral truth, errors in the representation of God's attributes, errors in the apportionment of praise and blame, errors originating in the grossest superstition, errors dependent on narrow, exclusive, bitter prejudices, bear an overwhelming proportion to the entire compilation; and belong unquestionably to that Talmudic atmosphere in which we are now told, by men who have not abjured the name of Christian, the pure and holy Spirit of our Master breathed, and lived, and attained its full development. It is indeed true that the later and larger portion of the *Talmud*, the so-called *Gemara*, presents those characteristics in an exaggerated and more repulsive form; but if you take the earliest and best part, the *Mishna*, you will find it full of a casuistry at once so trifling and so wearisome as to make a continuous perusal well-nigh impossible, save to one who has a special motive for pursuing the investigation. In it there are no less than 4008 decisions on points of legal and religious obligation, the larger portion being attributed to Hillel and his followers. Out of them it would be difficult to select any considerable consecutive number which would approve itself to reason or to the moral sense. Even that treatise called the *Pirke Aboth;* or *Decisions of the Fathers*, which has been lately edited, with a valuable Commentary, at Cambridge, the best-known and by far the most readable portion of the

Talmud, has the invariable characteristics of rabbinical teaching—casuistry, exclusiveness, and superstition.

That man's mind must be strangely constituted who could read such a treatise, and see in it any resemblance to the sermon on the mount. Never indeed does that Divine characteristic of absolute freedom from the alloy of human prejudices, of absolute superiority to all merely local and temporal influences, manifest itself more gloriously than when we turn, from the teaching of the best and noblest representatives of unchristianized Israel, to the words of Him Who spake as never man spake, in Whom we recognize the realization of all grace, the manife ion of all truth.

## SERMON III.

### Baptismal Fire.

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire."—Matt. iii. 11.

In the course of the present term I propose to discuss certain questions touching the source and commencement of the Christian's spiritual life, the means by which it is sustained and replenished, and gradually but steadily raised into that near communion and conformity with God, which alone can enable us to contemplate hopefully and trustfully the destiny which awaits us on our departure from this probationary state.

Our minds will be necessarily drawn in the first place to the consideration of the meaning and effects of the initiatory rite of baptism—a rite which in the lowest point of view is a token and witness of admission into the Christian Church, but in which our own Church, in the 25th Article "On the Sacraments," expressly recognizes "a *sure* witness and *effectual* sign of grace and God's good will towards us, by the which He doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken but also strengthen and comfirm our faith in Him." In that statement the English Church certainly does not

go beyond the clear teaching of Holy Writ, a teaching accepted in its fulness both by the great fathers of ancient Christendom, and by those to whom we are indebted, under God, for the removal from our formularies of all superstitious accretions. Without entering upon any controversies which divide sincere and earnest Churchmen into opposite schools, it appears to me quite possible to set forth great fundamental principles in their true light as regards their bearing upon our inward and spiritual life. And we cannot take a better starting-point for our inquiry than is suggested by John the Baptist's declaration touching the ordinance which he was commissioned to administer, and the sacrament which would be instituted by Him of Whom he was the herald and precursor. If we understand clearly what was the precise character, the significance and effect of John's baptism, we shall be in a position to contemplate those special characteristics of Christ's baptism in which it differs essentially from that preparatory rite.

Was the baptism of John merely formal and external? merely symbolizing, without assuming and conveying any spiritual influence, any cleansing and renewing of the inner man? Such does not appear to be a just inference from the numerous passages in Holy Scripture in which this baptism is mentioned. When our Lord asked the Pharisees whether in their opinion the baptism of John was from heaven or of men, there can be no doubt that the question was equivalent to a direct asseveration that its source, and if its source therefore its meaning and effect, must needs be divine

and spiritual. A baptism resting on such a foundation could be no mere formal rite; it was at least a seal and pledge of preparation for admission into that kingdom of which the near approach was proclaimed by the Great Precursor. Into what indeed does St. John Baptist say that he baptizes? into what but repentance (μετάνοια)? That is a spiritual process, implying not merely sorrow for past sins, and resolutions of amendment, but a real effectual change, the adoption of new principles, of a new mind. What does he say is the immediate effect of his baptism, that for which it was instituted, that which the people sought when they came to the Jordan confessing their sins? It was a spiritual effect, even the remission of sins. In fact all the expressions used, whenever this baptism is spoken of, rise far higher than the level reached by those who are wont to use the words water baptism when speaking of the sacrament ordained by our Lord. Do but realize the feelings and condition of those among the hearers of John the Baptist who came to him with hearts crushed by the consciousness of sin, with spirits half phrensied by the terror of impending judgment, when his words penetrated into the depths of conscience, bringing God's holiness and God's commandments to bear upon their hearts. Think you, when their souls had been partially relieved by an outpouring of confession, when at his word they entered the stream hallowed by so many manifestations of divine power and love, they sought and found nought but an outward formal representation of that deliverance and cleansing, without which life itself would

henceforth be intolerable to a burdened and polluted conscience? No; what they needed, what they were authorized to expect, what undoubtedly they found, was the pledge, nay more, the effectual means of immediate entrance into a different state, in which sincere repentance, itself the gift of God, would be crowned by a remission of sins. Such an account of John's baptism may appear overstrained, and it doubtelss goes beyond what is very commonly asserted to be its meaning and effect—a very natural assertion on the part of those who scarcely attribute equal, certainly not higher, efficacy to the Christian sacrament; but I certainly do not see how any account that falls short of this can be reconciled with the plain declarations of Scripture, with that which is involved in the heavenly commission, spiritual teaching, and spiritual work of the Baptist, who came to prepare the way of his Master, not by the inculcation of ceremonial observances, but by awakening the conscience, by pointing out the means and conditions of deliverance from sin.

Before we go on to consider in what specific characteristics the baptism of our Lord differed, as John so expressly states it must needs differ from his own, we should notice one point, which indeed may be regarded as a general law ever to be borne in mind when we compare early and preparatory institutions with those of the Christian dispensation. All that was spiritual, all that was effectual, all that spoke to the heart and conscience in the rites which were superseded by our Saviour's ordinances, was taken up into them—absorbed, not lost, remaining unchanged in essence,

only more largely developed, more efficaciously applied. This applies to the ancient ceremonial law, though in that case the outward form, being partly temporary and partly typical, was abolished at the coming of the great Antitype, the fulfiller of all righteousness; but on the baptism of John a peculiar honour was set. Consecrated as it had been by the acceptance of the Son of God, Whose divine nature and divine mission had been attested on the occasion of that acceptance, even the very outward form was retained as of perpetual and universal obligation in the Christian Church. In that element of water, sanctified, as our Church declares, by the Lord Jesus Christ's own baptism "to the mystical washing away of sins," every member of the visible Church recognizes the means and pledge of admission to its privileges. Among those privileges, that now and ever stands first which was promised and sealed in the baptism of John—far more clearly understood indeed, far more efficaciously applied, as connected inseparably with the acceptance and realization of conditions revealed only by the consummation of Christ's work—remission of sins. Pardon, forgiveness, relief of the conscience from that bond under which it would else lie prostrate and helpless, is the gift first sought, first found, ever more dearly cherished by every believer. The first words in which the apostles announced the need of baptism to the heart-stricken hearers at Pentecost spoke of repentance as its necessary condition, and remission of sins as its immediate consequence. That was the effect promised by St. Peter to the first Gentile convert to whom baptism was administered, "Through

the name of Jesus all who believe in Him should receive remission of sins." The word which St. Paul, many years after his baptism, recalled with peculiar feeling of grateful joy, was that addressed to him by Ananias after the short interval of darkness and intense humiliation which elapsed between his conversion and admission to the Church: "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." So far therefore we observe, *not* a distinction between the baptism of John and that of our Lord, but an inner principle common to them both—a principle which in fact underlies every manifestation made by God to the conscience and heart of man from the very moment of the Fall—a principle without which religious communion would have been impossible—a principle ever the same in essence, but revealed in varying forms according to the needs of man's heart and his capacity for apprehending their significance, in no form more distinctly represented than in that which John the Baptist instituted under heavenly guidance, and which our blessed Saviour adopted as His own.

But the material element being the same, and one special and principal effect being in substance the same, the question arises, In what does the specific difference between the two baptisms actually consist? As a general answer it may be said, that it consists in spiritual efficacy, an efficacy differing certainly in intensity, in degree if not in kind. Most probably it is a difference in kind, if we take into consideration that the baptism of John, though recognized as of heavenly origin and of spiritual character, was not accepted by the apostles

as a means or pledge of admission into the Church of Christ. This is proved by one decisive case: St. Paul re-baptized certain persons at Ephesus whom, as he said, John had verily baptized with the baptism of repentance; and then, and not till then, did they receive the Holy Ghost. This general answer, however, requires explanation. The spiritual efficacy in question may be said to come under two heads, closely connected, and indeed inseparable, yet distinct as subjects of contemplation. On the one hand, in Christian baptism, the convert, or the infant brought to the font by Christian parents and sponsors, is incorporated into a living body, which has its own peculiar functions, duties, and relationships, and of which Christ is the head, the perennial source of life. On the other hand, we have the declaration of St. John, who tells us that whereas his converts were immersed in a material element, which symbolized the cleansing and renewing grace of repentance: the Christian, as such, at and by virtue of Christ's initial sacrament, is plunged in a spiritual element—the element of spiritual fire well known as the manifestation and work of the Holy Ghost. Observe well the force of the word "in," inaccurately, and to the real obscuring of the sense, rendered in our version by "with." *In* the water and *in* the Holy Ghost and fire, in the laver of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, the whole being of the Christian undergoes a change, is subject to an influence which thenceforth pervades his inner life, which he may resist, but which he cannot quench, without losing altogether the very principle of union with Christ.

This, some may say, is mere dogma, mystical and vague, with little bearing on our actual state, on our trials and temptations. Is it so? Let us test it by our own experience, by facts of the inner life which at some time or other, force themselves upon our consciousness. Baptized in infancy, we do not of course know the effect of the first contact of the soul with Christ. We are bathed, so to speak, unconsciously in the fiery element, subjected for a season unwittingly to the influences whereby the Holy Spirit moulds the character, and stamps the image of Christ upon the heart. But at every crisis, every turning-point of our moral and spiritual life, we are awakened to a real consciousness of a power acting upon us and within us, not as a new, but as a renewed influence—a something which was there before, but now becomes realized—a force for which no expression can be found which so exactly brings out its meaning and efficacy as that of fire. It burns, it scorches; if resisted, it tortures, it makes every fibre and nerve of the inner man thrill and quiver; if welcomed and accepted, it consumes that evil thing in us which every one of us, even the most indifferent and inconsistent, more or less despises and loathes; it kindles in us those affections, quickens in us those principles, in which we find the only guarantee of our relationship to God—the only inward proof which at all reaches our spirits that we are no mere things of earth destined to annihilation, but heirs of immortality. It is a force which may or may not be effectual; for neither Holy Scripture nor, I venture to say, the conscience of any Christian, knows aught of an irresistible

grace working apart from, and independently of, the consent of the will; but it is the only force by which that will, spontaneously surrendering itself, can be turned towards God, and become partaker of salvation through Christ.

I ask you each and all, nay, ask your own consciences, whether or not this representation is true? Try it with reference to temptations addressed to your lower sensuous nature. What is the meaning of that burning, fiery sense of shame, that fierce, indignant wrath which is kindled in your hearts, which is directed against yourselves, when you realize the possibility of succumbing, when you feel within yourselves the struggle of which St. Paul speaks so often and so earnestly—the struggle of the flesh against the spirit—when, it may be, you recall the memory of some disastrous, if not ruinous, defeat? Is it not a pain unlike any other pain—a pain which may be suppressed, kept down by spiritual opiates, at which scorn may point the finger, and which that base, devilish spirit which haunts the sensualist may for a time deem that it has overcome, but a pain which survives in the very innermost depth of your consciousness, and bursts out years after the occasion has passed away with a sudden violence, fierce and scorching as when it was first inflicted? Inflicted by whom, by what agency, if not by spiritual fire, by the Holy Ghost? For just consider this—the pain, regarded apart from all other accidents, from remembrance of the effect upon a man's character, his fortunes and prospects, upon the happiness or character of others whom his acts may directly

or indirectly affect, as a spiritual pain, acting immediately upon our innermost and noblest feelings, is poignant and effectual just because and just so far as we are after all Christians—partakers of a new spiritual nature. We find indeed a near approach to it in some passages of the Old Testament, but scarcely except in cases of frightful transgressions of God's law—in such a case, for instance, as that of David—certainly not in any, save in spirits like those of Job and Daniel, which were illumined by spiritual contact with Him Whose coming they announced, and Whose special work they realized. But so far as my memory goes, the feeling in its peculiar intensity, in its fiery burning, is one which was altogether unknown to heathen moralists. Contempt for weakness and self-indulgence was of course felt, and it was expressed with unsurpassed eloquence and power; but pain, self-condemnation, the anguish of a soiled spirit, the burning of a spirit resolved not to be soiled, these are sensations of which I find no trace in the writings of those thinkers of old who adopted the highest standard of moral excellence and spiritual supremacy. Let the scholar examine, for instance, the *Phædrus* of Plato, in which he comes nearest to the subject, and compare his calm, cold judgment, amounting to something like an extenuation of the vilest sins, with the sentence of St. Paul upon every form of sensual sin, with the sentence of your own hearts, which, however far you may be from realizing the whole truth, have been unquestionably once touched, and unless now abandoned to gross sin are undoubtedly now acted upon, by the baptismal fire of the Holy Ghost.

Try the statement again with reference to your moral nature in other points. Is there one in this place whose experience does not tell him how the fire burns, how it blazes out, how it scorches, when he recalls from the past some breach of the law of love—unkind words remembered too late, cruel, harsh, or even merely thoughtless acts which grieved a father's or a mother's heart. I speak not of the deep remorse which they only can know whose sin has brought ruin irretrievable upon a brother's or a sister's soul. I would not confound the lurid glare of remorse with the bright fire of repentance. What I speak of is that anguish, keenest in the warmest and tenderest spirits, which breaks out when we remember the shortcoming, and evil-doings which may have inflicted deep wounds upon those whom we revered and loved. Or look to your professional life; it is a life not to be lived through in a Christian spirit without constant daily exposure to temptations at once subtle and vehement, so subtle that a spirit disciplined by Christ can alone discern their evil; so vehement that a spirit sustained by the Spirit of Christ can alone resist their force. Surely if there be one present who under temptation has ever swerved from the straight line, taken an unfair advantage, countenanced a wrong act, allowed a false plea, brought loss, or suffering, or disgrace upon an upright man, done an injustice, or stayed the course of justice, he will not deny that, just so far as his conscience is alive, just so far as it is possessed by Christian influence, it is sensitive to the fiery scorching action of that element in which the Christian has been plunged, and

from which he cannot emerge without loss of all spiritual life. That the feeling is really, substantially Christian, you will scarcely doubt when you compare the sentence, which, as I am well assured, your conscience pronounces, with that which is pronounced by men who are satisfied with the conventional morality of a mere worldly life.

I will go a step farther still. I ask you to test this principle by reference to your religious convictions. We are all, if not equally, yet all of us actually, exposed to the very severest temptations to which thoughtful men have ever been subjected. You need not be told how deep, how subtle, how powerful are the agencies now brought to bear upon our faith in the very foundations of all religion, revealed or natural. Now, I do not ask you at present to consider exactly in what condition your convictions touching God, your spiritual being, your destiny and duties may be: but I ask you this: When you feel, or when you first felt, any danger that the convictions which belong to your Christian character might be shaken, might be torn from you, is there not, was there not then a kindling, an outburst of that spiritual fire, sharp, scorching, just in proportion to the magnitude of the truth imperilled, and to your sense that it is imperilled? Christ does not suffer any man to cast Him off without bringing that agency to bear upon his conscience. The soul cannot abjure its responsibility to the great Judge without a torturing pang; it cannot and will not accept the sentence of annihilation without asserting its relationship to that Spirit which lighteth every soul in the

world, and which descends in all the fulness of personal action in the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The struggle is felt to no small extent by those without the Church. Voices from the past speak of the gloom which fell on man's heart when old primeval convictions were obscured; but how cold and hard are the terms in which Platonist and Stoic, in which a Cicero and a Seneca, speak of the possible alternative of eternal unconsciousness! How cold compared with the language of a Christian's heart, compared with the voice of your own hearts, with the anguish caused by the mere apprehension of any obscuration of the hope given by Him who brought life and immortality to life, and who sealed every one of us unto deliverance from death when He baptized us in the fire of the Holy Ghost.

## SERMON IV.

### Baptism into One Body.

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."—1 Cor. xii. 13.

On Sunday last we considered the working of the Spirit, of which baptism is the sign and pledge, upon the conscience and moral nature of Christians, more especially as regards sensitiveness to the approach of aught that imperils their spiritual life, and the fiery, scorching anguish which, so long and so far as that spiritual life is active, accompanies the remembrance and the consciousness of sin. This morning I propose to contemplate the general subject under a different point of view: to consider the Christian as incorporated by the same baptism into a living body, in which new duties spring from new relationships, in which his whole being, having undergone the preliminary change of regeneration, is developed in all its faculties and energies, and brought into conformity with Him in whom he lives and moves. This is the aspect in which St. Paul especially delights to set forth the condition of believers; it is at once intensely

spiritual and thoroughly practical—practical not only as it bears upon the overthrow of evil, and subjugation of our lower nature, but upon the complete transformation of our higher nature; not merely eliciting the noblest affections of the individual soul by personal contact with Christ, but expanding and strengthening those affections which belong to us as members of a brotherhood—a brotherhood comprehending not only all who are conscious of its existence, and fully open to its influences, but all for whom Christ died, and to whom the way of salvation has been made accessible by His blood. Christ claims all humanity as His own—that is the meaning, that is the result of His Incarnation; every living man is called upon to be a member of His body; towards every living man, converted or unconverted, the heart which has received Christ is drawn by the cords of love. In baptism, so far as it is realized, he is baptized into Christ's death—a death to sin, and a death for sin—and he puts on Christ—the affections and principles exemplified by the Saviour of the world.

But before we turn to those applications of the general principle to which I am specially anxious to call your attention, let me remind you of one truth which, under mistaken impressions as to its significance and bearings, is frequently overlooked, and by some directly denied. Holy Scripture speaks but of one baptism in Christ. It knows nothing of an outward ordinance apart from spiritual influences. In that baptism the change of condition is visibly, authoritatively, and effectually sealed. "By one Spirit

ye are *all* baptized into one body." All who are baptized into Christ are baptized into His death, and made partakers, conditionally, but potentially, of His resurrection. There is but one Lord, one faith, one baptism; there is but one body, that body of which Christ is the head. There is in that body but one life, the life which flows from Him; and that body is the Church, the visible Church instituted by Christ, with visible ordinances, visible ministers, a concrete external organization. In St. Paul's words, in a passage full of sharp rebukes and most impressive warnings, a passage addressed to weak and erring Christians, "Ye are the Body of Christ, and members in particular." So far as each member lives, it lives by virtue of the life emanating from the head, and animating the body corporate. The expression indeed is strictly metaphorical. Like all metaphors, it must be taken and applied with caution and discrimination. It must not be strained so as to represent that visible body as complete and living in all its parts with equal energy; its circulation in some limbs may be languid or impeded; many of its members may be as the branches of the vine in the last discourse of our Lord—fruitless, useless, decaying, perishing; but all the life they have, all the fruits they produce, all the Christian spiritual works they do, are the results of the one central life flowing through one body, into which we are born again by the regenerating baptism of the Holy Ghost.

And remark that this view, which is fully recognized in the creeds of the Church and in the writings of its greatest teachers, brings into strong relief the most

characteristic difference of Christianity from all religions that preceded it, from all systems which have addressed themselves to the moral or spiritual nature of man. False religions are essentially exclusive; each nation, each city, each family, had an object of worship which it kept to itself, for which it claimed reverence, but to which it did not even wish to attract proselytes. Schools of philosophy, even those which took the widest range, were content to draw together intellects capable of receiving and appreciating their distinctive tenets; and the more thoroughly they attained their object, the more completely they isolated their adherents from their fellow-men. Even the great prophets of Israel, the teachers and expositors of religious truth, acted upon a narrow circle, and did not attempt to realize the visions of an universal religion which they were commissioned to announce as the future work of Messiah. The spirit of Moses, lofty and commanding as it was, caught, so to speak, but momentary glimpses of the kingdom to which all nations should be equally admitted, and within which every individual would have equal privileges and equal rights. It was the work of the prophets, it was the work of Moses, it was the work of the law, with its significant observances, to prepare the way for such a kingdom; but, we may almost say, with little consciousness of all that would be involved in its realization. And St. John Baptist himself, to whom the crowning work of the preparatory dispensation was committed, went no further, although, under heavenly teaching, he comprehended and announced with a fulness and clearness as yet unknown the cha-

racteristics of that kingdom and of its King. His was not the work of forming a new association, much less of infusing into all its members a new spirit, apart from that repentance and sense of forgiveness, without which the very beginning of a religious life would have been impossible; less still of proposing to that group of converts who acknowledged in him the Voice crying in the wilderness, the office of conveying those tidings to the whole world, and of giving to every one who accepted them the assurance of equal participation in all the blessings and privileges of favoured subjects, nay, of reconciled children of the King of kings. John's baptism did much, as much as a preparatory rite could do; his preaching did much, as much as a preparatory announcement of truths hereafter to be revealed, and gifts hereafter to be bestowed, could do; but the work which is accomplished by the Church of Christ under the ever-present headship of its Lord, and in fulness of the Spirit which emanates from Him, differs from that of John as from all other precedents, not merely in degree, but in kind. It rises higher, infinitely higher, even to the eternal source of spiritual life: it penetrates deeper, even to the innermost springs of human consciousness: it operates more effectually, impressing upon the souls surrendered to its influence the very image and similitude of the new man who after God is created unto holiness; it reaches to the full extent ever suggested in the most glorious prophecies, claiming the whole world as its own, and offering to every individual, nay, conveying to every individual incorporated into the Church by Christ's baptism, all that is signified by the means of

grace or by the hope of glory. It is a mark of sectarianism, of the narrow spirit of Judaism, full of exclusive prejudices ever and anon reproduced by sects, that it draws a line between the members of this Church, not determined by their use or neglect of its privileges, but by a restriction arbitrarily assigned to the Divine will, in strange contradiction to all that He has made known of His nature. It is a mark of true Catholicity, a mark seen more distinctly in no community than in our own, that in every member it sees a child of God in Christ Jesus; that it adopts without any mental reservation, without any attempt to explain away or extenuate its meaning, that most comprehensive and practical statement of St. Paul, "By *one* Spirit are we *all* baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink of one Spirit."

So that for each of us the one question to be considered is this, not how we may *become* Christians, as in point of fact the question is really put by those who separate regeneration from baptism, but how we can *live* as Christians, have the fulness and power of the Christian life in us, be assured of its quickening presence, and be prepared by its development for the state in which all other accidents of our being will disappear, leaving us as before God's throne unclothed, if we be not clothed in the righteousness of Christ. The answer to this plain question falls naturally under two heads. We can only retain the life and develop the life by receiving and appropriating all the influences which flow from Christ, that must needs be the first condition;

to employ all the powers so communicated for the benefit of all our brethren, that is the second condition, inseparable from the first, and only separated in treatment for the sake of orderly consideration. I do not undertake, indeed I hardly suppose that you would expect me to undertake, to say anything new on either of these points. Originality on all fundamental questions of religious principle is for the most part dearly bought; it can indeed rarely be acquired save by the sacrifice of the simple, straightforward truthfulness which is the first condition of real faith. I shall be content to urge those truths which, obvious and unquestionable as they are, I know but too well from my own experience that we are all in danger of forgetting or disregarding, and which we never neglect, even for a season, without grievous detriment to our souls. At present I will confine myself to the consideration of the first-mentioned condition, the reception and appropriation of spiritual influences which flow from Christ.

Here I will ask you to look at the last clause of the text. It is rendered, "We have been all made to drink into one Spirit;" but the words really mean, according to the old received text, ἐποτίσθημεν εἰς ἓν πνεῦμα into one Spirit; but the preposition *into* is regarded by all critical authorities as an interpolation, easily accounted for by the construction of the preceding clause. You will probably find that it is omitted in the copies of the Greek Testament now in your hands. It certainly obscures St. Paul's meaning. What he says is this, "We *were* all made to drink one Spirit;" that is, to receive as a spring of life, as the fountain and

perennial source of all grace and power, one Spirit, which, however it may vary in outward manifestations and in inward effects, is the same in essence in every member of the Church.

Of these effects take one first, and look at it practically. Truth, Christian truth, vividly, effectually apprehended, that is the first and very special gift of the Spirit. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," is our Lord's account of Himself. "When the Spirit is come He will lead you into all truth;" that is His account of the work of the Spirit. What does the reception of this truth involve on our part? It involves a great deal; it involves earnestness, candour; above all, such humility as is unattainable save in the school of Christ. It involves a determination to grasp and apply the teaching, "If we be not lovers of truth, we shall not find the truth." It may be near to us, about us; it may be the very atmosphere in which we live as Christians, but it will not be within us as the light and life of our spirits, unless we give ourselves up to the work of realizing it. Remember always, when you look at this side of your spiritual life, that the search after truth has two aspects, a negative and a positive aspect. The positive is that on which life depends. The negative is necessary by accident, so to speak; it is a result of our condition, not as Christians, but as sinful, erring, and very ignorant creatures. We cannot indeed dispense with it. The encroachments of error in all departments of moral, intellectual, and spiritual life are too incessant and too formidable not to require vigilance and earnestness in resisting

them; and unless we can shut out of our field of vision all speculative objections to the truth, and all superstitious or rationalistic perversions of the truth, some portion, nay, a very considerable portion, of our time and energies must needs be expended in investigating and rebutting them. But you must not forget, on the one hand, that in order to follow out to its ultimate results any one course of inquiry into which this attempt may lead you, in order thoroughly to understand and exhaust the subjects which it will bring before you, an amount of attention and labour is required which very few indeed can bestow, and which is often scarcely compatible with the discharge of the first duties of existence. Nothing is more astonishing than the levity and presumption which decides upon such questions touching the authenticity of certain portions of Holy Scripture, without even an elementary knowledge of the language in which they are written, with a total unconsciousness that of all critical questions the very last on which a consensus of interpreters is to be found, is that of the age and the authorship of such compositions as the Homeric poems, or of the Pentateuch. In fact to determine any single question as to the agreement or discrepancy of scriptural statements with the discoveries or speculations of science requires such a knowledge of scriptural exegesis, and of the actual, positive, and demonstrable results of true science, as few indeed could ever hope to attain in this age of unbounded and very indefinite speculations; a knowledge such as they of all men are least likely to profess whose minds are severely dis-

ciplined by the examination of facts, by the habit of sifting evidence. Were life extended to antediluvian longevity, it would be inadequate to master the additional problems suggested by cosmical theories and the conflicting systems of metaphysics, or so-called positive philosophy, each and all of which have important bearings on the evidences of religion, and which cannot be admitted into our sphere of mental vision without serious effects. I do not fear the charge of prejudice. I know but too well the strange attraction that each and all of these subjects has for the restless and curious intellect. I fully recognize the value of every truth which has been won by fair inquiry, or wrested by vigorous efforts from antagonists; but it is with entire confidence, and with deep gratitude to our great Teacher, I assert that our life, our spiritual being, our spiritual development, depends on our acceptance and appropriation of the plain, simple, elementary truths of positive revelation; the truths made known with equal clearness and equal fulness to every believer who surrenders himself to the teaching of the Spirit of God. Drink deeply of that source, and it will fill you with life and power; will give a sunlight sufficient for guidance, sufficient to enable you to contemplate undismayed the march of intellect; sufficient to sustain you in life, and to prepare you for death. Fix your thoughts, each day as you rise to begin your work, each night as you reflect on the state of your souls, on those things which you learned as children, but which you will only comprehend in all their significance in eternity; for those are the things which belong to salva-

tion; those are the truths which the Spirit of God, and He only, can enable every one of us to realize and use.

And bear with me if I press one other point very urgently, and under the sense of a very heavy responsibility. The Spirit of God does not give light, the light which reaches the innermost conscience, without giving life. You are members of Christ, not merely by receiving Christ's truth, but by receiving Christ's nature, by becoming partakers of His body, partakers of His blood. Men who know the meaning of words cannot surely believe that they possess, or can retain, the conditions of Christian fellowship if they neglect the means which He has appointed to be the channel of the very dearest and most precious influences. Communicants and Christians—speaking of adults—ought surely to be regarded as synonymous and convertible terms. Not to be a communicant is in simple fact to be voluntarily and persistently excommunicate. I ask you whether you, who have discontinued or rarely use the first privilege of Christians, find that the neglect of Christ's express command has been attended with no practical results upon your inner life? I do not speak to men whose consciences are seared, who are quite indifferent to the contact of sin, to whom impurity or spiritual deadness are empty words; I do not believe that any of you are in such a state. Why indeed, were you so, should you be present here? Those who have cast off Christ in these days, have very generally thrown off the religious observances hitherto prescribed even by the conventionalities of a Christian society; but I appeal to you as men, in whom, if nothing else, yet the

very upbraiding, the smart and struggle of conscience, bear witness to the still effectual operation of the baptismal fire of God's Spirit—I appeal to you whether the withdrawal from the sacrament of Holy Communion has or has not been either caused, or if not caused yet followed, by a relapse into habits of which it needs no deep perception of Christian truth to discern the evil? Or if you have been preserved, as I am fain to admit many are really preserved, from gross sins, by the strong, manly, generous spirit, which characterizes no small portion of our educated youth, yet let me again ask you, has the cessation or rare use of that Christian duty left you strong, hopeful in spirit, lovers of God, lovers of Christ, ever conscious of an immortal origin, and an immortal destiny, as in your best moments you yourselves would wish to be?

## SERMON V.

### The Hidden Life.

"Your life is hid with Christ in God."—Col. iii. 3.

This great saying of St. Paul makes a deep impression, by reason of its beauty and of its mystery. We feel that it deals with the inmost experience of Christians; that it is, and must be, all but unintelligible to those who know nothing of the workings of the Holy Spirit; and there is no inconsiderable danger lest many of us should put it aside, or be satisfied with a vague acquiescence, instead of taking to heart the lessons, equally strong in warning and encouragement, which the apostle was inspired to teach. Before we examine more closely into its meaning and various applications, it will be well to consider the passage in which it occurs, some expressions in which are often misunderstood.

One point ought to be brought out clearly, for it was one which St. Paul had very specially at heart; viz., that the truth which he thus sets before us concerns every one who is bound to Christ by the covenant of grace and responsibility, that is, every one who has been baptized into Christ; though its application necessarily varies in proportion to our progress in the spiritual life,

or to the degree in which we fall short of the mark of our high calling. It will be best apprehended, and most readily applied, by those who strive most earnestly to come near their Saviour. It will give them support in time of need, consolation in time of sorrow or darkness; but it will reach all of us in some way who have not wilfully abandoned themselves to evil influences, and cut off the channels whereby the Spirit pours gracious influences into the heart.

In the first place I will ask you to observe that the Colossians whom St. Paul addresses had fallen, or were in danger of falling, into practices which argued a singular want of spirituality. He does not speak to them as eminent Christians, standing above and apart from the common mass, but as persons who did not realize the greatness of the blessing bestowed equally on all members of Christ's Church. What he said to them applies to all Christians, weak, ignorant, and imperfect as they may be. Now his words in the beginning of this chapter are, "If ye then be risen with Christ," or, as the meaning is more accurately expressed, "If, or since, ye were raised with Christ" (εἰ οὖν ἠγέρθητε, not a present state, but a past act; not conditional, but absolute), as in fact all of you were raised in baptism out of a state of death and condemnation into a state of life and acceptance, made virtually partakers of Christ's resurrection, seek, strive, earnestly to attain to, set your affections upon the great realities made known to you all by the gospel; occupy yourselves with the thoughts which befit those who believe in a living Saviour, with thoughts of love, of light, of

holiness; live up to your vocation. The right to heaven, to eternal life, was sealed to you in baptism; the power to assume that right was offered to you, nay, in germ and principle was bestowed upon you, when you became Christians. See to it that you do not forfeit the right; see to it that the power is not withdrawn, as withdrawn it certainly will be if you refuse or neglect to use it.

Brethren, have this constantly in mind. You have not to enquire whether you have the right, whether you have been brought near to Christ; but whether, having once received, and still retaining conditionally, the right to heaven, you are acting in accordance with it; whether, being heirs, joint-heirs with Christ, you live as children of your Father which is in heaven. Do not look out for a new birth, but realize the fact that you have been born again; and that if you have suffered that new life to decay, you have simply to pray and strive for its renovation. The fire is there, at the worst, still smouldering, and when you call upon God's Holy Spirit it will be brought into a bright flame, quickened and rekindled by His breath.

Take again the statement immediately preceding the text. It is this: "For ye are dead!" a perfectly true statement as regards its meaning applied to believers, yet, like the rendering of the first verse, not exactly expressing the sense of the original. That means strictly, "for ye died" (not τεθνηκότες, or νεκροὶ, but ἀπεθάνετε; not τεθνήκατε, or νεκροί ἐστε), became, as Christians, dead to sin, dead in principle, dead in potentiality, dead in spirit; just as our Catechism, that

singularly true and complete exponent of Church doctrine and Bible teaching, tells us, the inward and full effect of baptism is a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness. Just so far as you are living a Christian life—a life of prayer, a life of duty, a life of holiness—your new birth is a present reality; just so far as you abjure fleshly, spiritual sins—sins of impurity, falsehood, dishonesty, pride, selfishness—you are now dead, as in baptism you died; *i.e.* had the assurance of being dead to that which can alone cut you off from salvation. I do not know, brethren, whether I have presented these thoughts with sufficient clearness; they belong to the elementary truths of religion. Christ, your Saviour, offers salvation to all. He bestows the power of attaining to eternal life upon all who are joined to Him by His own great sacrament of baptism; but He makes the continuance of that power, the realization of every blessing, contingent upon your use of the means of grace, upon your assiduity in prayer, upon your exertions and struggles, upon the direction which you give to your affections. If you set them on earthly, sensual pleasures, you are lost; if you set them on goodness, on heaven, on the things of heaven, you are saved. You have life, the life of Christ, the life which is hid with Christ in God; and when Christ, who is thus truly your life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.

We thus come to the consideration of the text. What is meant by this new life being hid? Does not the life show itself by its acts? Does not its light shine before men? Is it not felt by all who share it? I think

that, upon reflection upon facts within your own experience, you will see that, even where the life is real and powerful, it is actually hid in a true sense. It is hid in the first place from those without. Unbelievers look on a Christian without recognizing the inward power by which he is actuated. They misinterpret his words and acts; above all, they misinterpret his motives. This to some extent is inevitable. We cannot understand feelings with which we do not sympathize; cannot appreciate motives which we do not share. This is true in all departments of secular life. The life of a man of science is a mystery to the uninstructed; the artist, sculptor, musician, poet, lives a life, moves in a sphere, of his own. Men see the results of such life, but the life itself is a mystery. They cannot conceive in what the intensity of its interest, its sufferings, or its enjoyment consists. So it is, so it must be, so it ever has been, and ever will be, in the case of religious spiritual life. Outward acts men will see; the inner movements, the joys, the sorrows, the growth or decay of the life itself they will not see. Christians must be content to be misunderstood, and reckon upon being misrepresented. In early ages they were watched with curious eyes, with utter perplexity, by men who represented the light and intelligence of the natural world —such men as Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, and the later Platonists; so indeed it is in every age, in our own age most strikingly. But you should ever remember that although none who do not know and love your Saviour can enter into your feelings towards them, or look upon your hopes and faith as other than human illusions, they

can judge critically, and ofttimes very truly, of your actions; they are quick to discern inconsistencies, note with scorn and triumph words and looks which show that you are under the dominion of low, selfish, covetous, or malignant feelings. They cannot see your life, for that is hid, but they can see the results, and if it be a true life, they can and may be won by such results. Indeed every great advance in Christianity, I may almost say every conversion of unbelievers, has been effected by the outward proof that something high, something unselfish, something holy, something divine, must have been the motive principle of Christians with whom they have been brought into contact. Persecutors thus became confessors and martyrs; the opponents became the advocates of the gospel in times of old; and if, as I doubt not, the issue of present trials and assaults be a fresh and mighty outburst of Christian energies, of fresh triumphs over the powers of darkness, that issue will be brought about by the loving, self-denying, self-sacrificing acts of Christians, at first perhaps awakening the animosity, but finally attracting the sympathy, of those who, not sharing, cannot discern aught of the hidden life. Live as Christians, utterly regardless of the judgment which men may pass upon your inner life, but tremblingly sensitive to the effect which may, and must, be produced by its outward manifestations.

But this life is not hid merely from those who do not share it. You must count upon its being to a very great extent hid from your fellow-Christians. This is owing partly to our common infirmities and mutual misunderstandings. The best men live so far below

their professions and their convictions; the most earnest and most faithful men are so utterly unable to appreciate acts and habits of their brethren educated under other systems than that to which they owe their own advancement in religion; words and acts are such inadequate exponents of our deepest feelings. This we see daily exemplified in other matters. Men having substantially the same principles, aiming at the same ends, are often in open antagonism, thwart and misrepresent each other. In families, hearts that beat most warmly and affectionately are misconceived; slight faults of temperament or of character obscure the judgment; chilling mists or sudden storms come over kindred hearts and threaten even to quench the light of love. And this is peculiarly the case in respect of the religious life. In fact by far the greatest and most important portion is of necessity hidden. None but the man himself can know aught of his communings with God. His griefs and his joys are alike a secret between himself and his Saviour. Even in our offering of common prayer it is impossible for us to know, we do not think it right to conjecture, how far a brother's heart accompanies the words of devotion put into his mouth by our wise and loving teacher the Church. We know that when we ourselves pray most seriously our words and looks are ofttimes least demonstrative of feeling; we know, alas! that when we are not inwardly stirred by devout affections, the very struggle against the inward defect often produces unconscious indications of peculiar earnestness. So it is with each and all of us. And as for those hours of

secret prayer, when the heart bares itself, pours out its confessions, utters its aspirations to God, when Christ who is our life claims and commands our very being, these movements are altogether withheld from human ken; nor will their effects or their reality be manifested until He be manifested Himself in glory. Care not then on the one hand if your fellow-Christians think but badly of your spiritual state, but take at the same time the warning to heart very seriously, and neither express nor form uncharitable judgments of your brethren. Their life is hid from you; their life may be strongest when you are least impressed by its manifestations; their life and your life are equally present to the all-seeing eye, having its source in Christ, and its highest development in charity.

One other point remains to be considered of gravest import to our hearts. The hidden life to a very great extent is hidden from those who possess it and are strongly actuated by it. This is partly owing to personal characteristics, partly to incomplete or erroneous views on religion. Many a tender and loving spirit is subject to fits of extreme depression, when the light of spiritual life seems utterly obscured. Many an honest and sincere heart is so troubled by the consciousness of former sins and actual sinfulness that it cannot trust its own aspirations. Many minds are disturbed by systematic representations of religion resting on isolated texts or partial interpretations, which lead them to seek for assurance or direction where it will not really be found. Instead of steadily pursuing the course of spiritual and practical duty distinctly laid down for

them in Holy Writ, instead of realizing the great and precious gifts which God bestows freely on all who seek Him, which He has pledged, and sealed, and secured to every Christian as such, they are ever enquiring whether they have reason to believe that He really loves them; whether they are His children by election; whether His solemn promises are to be relied upon in their own case. This is a morbid, and I fear not an uncommon, state; but for the disease there is a sure and safe remedy. It is indeed a remedy equally efficacious for every form of spiritual disease. Seek those things which are above; fix your minds upon things above. That is the direction given by St. Paul; and it is not a direction liable to be misunderstood by those who have the hidden life, though they may be at times unable to recognize its power or its existence. To the Christian troubled by clouds of despondency it says, Do not go on examining your own feelings, testing, as it were, the presence of life by the beatings of your spiritual pulses, but look out of yourselves; look away from your fellowmen; do not trouble yourselves about their judgments or reasonings; look straight at Christ. See Him bearing the marks which He bore on the cross; see Him as the Lord of life now in heaven, now as ever present in spirit to the hearts raised heavenward. Keep your mind fixed upon the glorious truths which He has revealed touching Himself. The very effort to do this will shake off the gloomy fit of despondency. On making the effort you will become conscious of the fact that the gloom comes from without, that it is a shadow cast upon your soul by the evil one, to whom you may

unconsciously have given an accesss by neglect of the consolations ever offered to you, and specially pledged to you in sacramental communion, by the Holy Ghost the Comforter. Take this as a most true and practical rule, when you are next troubled with doubts as to your having the hidden life—Christ will not withhold His light if, forgetting yourself, you turn at once towards Him.

So too with regard to your former sins, to your sense of guiltiness. That thought indeed is not to be put away. The death to sin is an ever-recurring act, repeated daily, hourly, in Christian experience. As faith and hope are constantly renewed, so too is repentance. Penitent outpourings of the heart are most characteristic of sincerest Christians; but Christian repentance brings the soul straight to the cross, lifts the heart heavenwards, sets before us our High Priest now present in heaven, ever offering intercessions for us. Repentance is in fact the first most unmistakable proof that the hidden life is active, energetic within us. You may at times distrust other aspirations, not knowing how far they spring out of the spiritualized heart. You cannot distrust sorrow for sin, hatred of sin, scorn of sin, scorn of your own lower nature which has allowed any sin to have dominion over you; for those are feelings which belong essentially to the Christian character, which prove that the fire of the Holy Ghost is burning within you, giving, it may be, sharp agony so long as the evil is persistent, but through that awful process cleansing and refining the spirit, and removing all hindrances to the development of the hidden life.

Nor do I believe that any other process will be effectual if speculations, rife in all ages of religious controversy, trouble your spirit about the dealings of God with man, not distinctly revealed, doubtless because impossible so to be revealed. You may reason for ever about the foreknowledge, the almightiness of God, and the utter guiltiness of fallen man—never will you, or will any man, reconcile the equally certain truths of Divine prescience and human responsibility. St. Paul deals with such questions simply with the view of overthrowing Jewish prejudices; deals with them in a way which, as St. Peter pointed out,* should teach extremest caution in their application by Christians to themselves and their brethren; but follow that apostle's direction, given here to all Christians, and you will be safe—you will be raised into another sphere, a sphere where no controversies harass the loving spirit. Look up at Christ in heaven; look upon Him holding out His arms to all; hear Him calling all the loved ones with an equal love; listen to Him giving you instructions which you cannot misunderstand, which you must feel cannot be disobeyed without ruin; put away all evil passions, all sensual habits, "for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." When you occupy yourselves earnestly with that work you will be effectually debarred from idle and interminable speculations. The hindrances in your daily walk will demand all your energies; conscious of your own weakness, you will not be tempted to misjudge your brethren; becoming, as you will

* 2 Peter iii. 16.

become daily, more conscious of your need of help and of the marvellous readiness with which that help is supplied in answer to your distressful cry, you will need no other proof of inward vitality. The very sense of danger, the invariably following sense of relief in time of need, will assure you at once of that life being real, and of the necessity of using every means by which it can be protected, cherished, and developed. And if under Christ's guidance you can and do set your affections on the glorious realities of heaven, on the light and glory filling the spiritual universe, on the Father's pardoning love, on the Son's all-perfect and accepted sacrifice, on His enthronement as King of kings, and Lord of lords, on the manifestations of the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life, the eternal Comforter; you will attain by a sure, if gradual, process to a full realization of the life within you—a life known to you, it may be, now chiefly by its struggles, its pains, trials, and aspirations, better known as you advance daily onwards in the ways of duty and holiness, but to be known hereafter in all its fulness; "for when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

## SERMON VI.

### The Manifested Life.

**"The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."**—1 Cor. xii. 7.

Life is a great mystery. Physiologists can tell us nothing of its source, nothing of its essence. What the force within us really is which enables us to move and act, none but speculative thinkers profess to know, or even attempt to conjecture. That which alone falls under our observation, and is capable of exact appreciation, is its mode of operation, together with the signs of its presence, the means by which its growth can be accelerated, and the causes of its decay and departure. And of all things which constitute an absolute difference between it and all other forces none is more conspicuous or more important in its practical bearings than this. It is strengthened and developed by exercise, within limits easily ascertained: the more we use it, the fuller is our consciousness of its presence, the more complete and healthy is our own physical development. Material bodies are preserved by disuse; laid aside for ages, they retain their form and properties; just so far as they are subjected to friction they are worn out; just so far as they are exposed to

atmospheric action they are liable to disintegration and decay. But inaction, suspension of motion, rest prolonged beyond the period marked out by nature for seasonable restoration, is ruinous, in the long run fatal, to us; the limbs grow stiff, are contracted, shrink away, are dried up, unless the life flowing into them from the central source is directed to its proper objects, unless it is used.

You will be at no loss to understand my object for bringing these well-known facts to your remembrance. True as they are of our natural life, in a far higher sense are they true of our spiritual life. Its very essence is movement; its growth is exactly commensurate with its activity. The one great difference between it and the natural life is, that whereas this force, which is common to us with the lower animals, is limited within narrow bounds, if overstrained gives way, and is ultimately worn out by the very processes which are necessary for its development, the spiritual life is practically unbounded. The wider its range, the greater is its energy; the more completely it accomplishes the objects for which it is bestowed, the stronger it becomes. It is free because it is divine; because its work, its intent and effect, is to reproduce and to complete in us the likeness of Christ, "till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." That is St. Paul's representation of the object and result of all true spiritual development. And far as we must be from realizing the full meaning of such words, just so far in

fact as we are from having attained to the stature of the apostle himself, to whom they seemed but inadequate exponents of his conception, yet we shall find no difficulty in their application. This we know—the more we pray, the better we pray; the more we struggle against sin, the stronger we become in resisting sin; the more earnestly we search after truth, the more vivid is our appreciation of its excellency; the more actively we endeavour to fulfil our duties to our fellow-men, the more clearly do we discern the best means of doing good, and the more powerful is the influence which we bring to bear upon others: and, to rise higher still, the more earnestly we contemplate the characteristics of our Saviour, the more vivid and distinct is the impression made upon us; and above all, the more strenuously we strive to follow His example in the way which He points out, and by using the means which He offers, the more intensely conscious do we become of the reality of that spiritual life of which we became potentially partakers in baptism, when we were made members of His body, and were thus brought under the cleansing and quickening influences of His blood. No one of us ever did any Christian work in a Christian spirit without some immediate result bearing witness to its efficacy; but it is only by a continuance of works, only by a succession of efforts, ever increasing in vigour, and therefore in efficiency, that the character can be formed and developed which will fit us for that state in which the spirit will find its true home, and in which alone it will comprehend the mysteries of existence.

All this may sound exaggerated or unreal, and undoubtedly it does assume a certain amount and quality of religious experience to find a practical meaning in such expressions; but that meaning is there, and we must get at it, and use it. There is no use in lowering Christian truths in the vain hope of conciliating opponents. There is much use in setting the highest truths distinctly before our minds; the more we think of them the less disposed shall we be to waste our energies in dealing with secondary questions, with matters really indifferent, if not practically detrimental, to our spiritual life. And let me point out that the amount of religious experience which is really required is no more than may be fairly assumed in every member of a Christian congregation, no more than a man must have if he is in the habit of praying at all, of meditating on religious truth at all, of resisting fleshly or spiritual temptations at all, of trying in any sense to live a Christian life. And let me further point out, that the combination of the inner spiritual life with active discharge of all Christian duties is, of all characteristics, that which most especially distinguishes our religious system; it is, to use once more an accurate and pregnant term, the *differentia* of Christianity. Religious contemplation, devout abstraction, a complete separation from the world of sense and action, these are objects pursued with a tension of spirit, an earnestness and determination of purpose, which command a reluctant admiration by myriads in all ages, more especially in the East. But to be at once devout and practical, to rise to communing with God, and in that communing to gather strength for outer

action, to acquire a perfect mastery over the senses, and to use them when subjugated as agents in the fulfilment of duty, this is a combination exhibited in its fulness only in the life of Him in Whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily, but which must be exhibited according to the measure of our capacities and of our faith, by every one who professes to be His follower and to bear His name.

But passing from general considerations, let us try some applications of the principle. Take first that which naturally presents itself—the use to be made of the *truth* which we have received. The truths actually in our possession, actually recognized by all of us who are in any sense believers, constitute a treasury of which the amount and value are incalculable. In fact any one central truth, were it but fully apprehended, would be seen to involve all other truths as antecedents or consequences; but even taken by itself, taken in the form and to the extent in which we apprehend it, it is a living force sufficient to let in light, and with light a new life, into the heart. It is often said that more harm than good is done by a man, honest as he may be, who parades his religious convictions, who introduces religious subjects unseasonably, or without regard to the prejudices or feelings of his companions. But the whole force of that remark rests in the one word—parade. The slightest suspicion that personal vanity prompts the utterance produces a natural recoil; take away that element, and a simple unostentatious declaration of the truth which we hold unreservedly is never ineffectual. When it does not convince it moves, it forces

attention; and—I appeal to your own experience for confirmation—it often takes sudden root, buries itself in the heart, and in time makes its effect perceptible in a change of character and feeling. You can scarcely read the biography of any man who has gained a name for good work in the cause of man and God, without finding intimations of the effect wrought by some word, spoken, it may be, with little consciousness of its adaptation to the hearer's innermost cravings, some word which carried a direct conviction that the truth which it expressed was a living reality to the speaker.

It is quite true that few men are much affected by arguments adduced in conversation upon religious subjects. Arguments under the conditions which social intercourse imposes must needs be incomplete and inconclusive; and as a matter of course they are generally concerned with questions about which differences of opinion exist, and will always exist, between conscientious inquirers; or they deal with speculations alike incapable of proof or of disproof. We must all of us have frequently experienced the weariness of spirit, the exhaustion or irritation, which followed upon discussions in which keen and subtle intellects and zealous but unwise spirits have contended for the mastery, even when the discussion has been conducted with ability and earnestness. But that which arguments, which rouse the spirit of opposition, can seldom effect, can be effected, and is daily effected, by a simple expression of a man's personal conviction. And let me say this—again appealing to your own experience for the truth of the saying—the truths which you really do hold

never reveal themselves to your own hearts with power, or at least with their full power, until they have been spoken out—spoken out, it may be, on some critical occasion when the utterance may be actually painful, but when it could not be suppressed without cowardice or treachery. You know that God's eye is open upon your hearts; that is a truth which as long as it is not uttered is apt to remain within you as a mere truism. Speak it out to one who denies or ridicules the spiritual power in the universe, and it will shine forth as a new light, new in a sense even to yourself; and coming from your heart, it will penetrate into that heart with which you are in contact. You must indeed speak it out if challenged; for if it be not spoken out it will lose all its power in yourself; practically abjured, it will be withdrawn from your consciousness. It is a manifestation, the first manifestation of the Spirit, given to you not to hide, but to profit withal. And so with every other great truth, every truth more especially which the natural heart at once needs most urgently and rejects most desperately; the truth of our sinfulness, and of the power by which it is remedied; all truths which find expression in the cross of Jesus and in His resurrection. Only let us Christians beware that we give no such utterance to any truths save those which are to ourselves realities. The honest defence of any one truth will be rewarded, by a just and natural process, by an increase of inward light and inward power; and when we have that increase we may, and shall naturally, impart to others that which we have ourselves received, but not till then. Observers will be keen to detect the

indications of internal misgiving; only the truth that flashes unbidden from the eye, that bursts forth in burning, living utterances from the full heart, carries with it conviction, and is availing for the restoration of a soul alienated from God, yet still capable of communion with Him.

But the reluctance, amounting almost to an unconquerable repugnance, to give expression to our convictions, and to declare ourselves advocates of truth, has some excuse to plead. It is in many cases a result of that shyness and reserve which is often associated with intense convictions, and is most observable in men of noble and concentrated character. It should be struggled against, should be overcome at whatever cost, for the sake of Him Whose truth, and of His creatures whose spiritual well-being, is imperilled. It may not indeed in itself be necessarily or immediately fatal to the inner life. There may be some present who know from their own experience, that it can co-exist with entire belief, though if indulged it leaves an uneasy sense of failure and deficiency in moral courage. But turn to another aspect, and while every plea for faintness is cut off, there the results for good or evil, for good in case of success, for evil in case of failure, are clear and inevitable. What are the enemies against which the Christian man has really to contend? What but evil in himself, and evil in the world? What but sin and its personal embodiment, whose presence, if questioned by the discursive reason, far more frequently wrong than right in spiritual matters, is instinctively felt by the heart, conscious of the approach of evil, and dread-

ing its infection? Look at the result of a defeat on the one side, on the other of a real victory; and look at it not as a matter of speculation, of curious inquiry, but as a matter of practical experience, attested by your own past lives, by acts now living in their consequences, acts permanently affecting your spiritual state.

Is there one here who does not know something of the result of giving way, though it were but temporarily, to what he knew well was an evil, a moral evil? The thing stood before us; we saw it clearly; we made no mistake as to its character; it involved a wrong-doing, a departure from the straightforward course, selfishness, self-indulgence, triumph of some malignant principle not wholly eradicated, even though hated by generous spirits; and yet we did not resist it, did not resist it earnestly; did not find, for we did not seek, inward help—the help pledged to us in baptism; the help which no Christian youth has ever failed to experience on some trying occasion of that most trying period, his school-boy life. What was the effect of such yielding? I will not ask what was the effect if the surrender was complete, if it was repeated, if it was permanent. Let them answer that question who, as St. Paul will tell us, are abandoned to a reprobate mind, who have given themselves over to work all uncleanness with greediness, and in whom the moral sense, if not dead, is torpid, is diseased, and perishing. This however I do ask: So far as the evil was admitted, did it not bring with it some foreshadowing, some foretaste of spiritual death? There is a state well known

to all of us at times, to some frequently recurring, a state, partly physical, partly moral, when a man sees clearly enough that he is surrounded by genial influences, forms and hues full of grace and beauty, and yet, though he sees this, he cannot realize it in his feelings. As one who knew better than most men that strange morbid condition of mind, who was equally capable of suffering under it and of understanding its remote and latent causes, expresses it, "I see, not feel, how beautiful it is." That state has its analogy, nay, exists in its highest and intensest form, in our spiritual condition. When we have been faithless to a principle, when we have fully closed our eyes to a manifestation of the Spirit of truth, of righteousness, of purity, and in act or in intention disobeyed the inward warning, how have we felt when we afterwards endeavoured to realize our condition? The principle was there still, distinct as ever; God's word, the manifestation of His will, was before our minds; but beautiful as we still knew it to be, according fully with our moral judgment, we were unable to realize its beauty. We were out of gear, dark, and disordered inwardly; and the main proof, I had almost said the only proof, that death had not set in was the dull, heavy aching of conscience. Well for us if the aching was intense, if it did not cease, if it burst out in the fiery torture which, I doubt not, is the last intimation that the Spirit of God, though grieved, yet worketh effectually in us. Well for us indeed; for if the pain be effectual, if it be welcomed, it will be the precursor of renewed health and vigour, enabling us to contend successfully against evil in any

form which it may assume, subtle and manifold as will be the disguises and the fascinations which it may present to our souls.

One result of every honest struggle, of every real victory over evil, of every advance in personal conformity to God's will is certain; it is a result which cannot fail. No man who has known the deadliness of sin, and the vehement effort needed to resist it, can possibly remain cold and apathetic when he observes its action upon his fellow-men. The more severely he has been tried, the more complete will be his sympathy with those who are in danger. Observe, I do not say, the more completely he has *fallen*. No man was ever the better for sinning. Selfishness, unrighteousness, uncleanness, enter no heart, even for a season, without leaving traces of defilements, without a weakening of the moral faculties or the moral sense; but your experience will bear me out when I say, the sharper the struggle may have been, the closer it may have brought you into contact with the unseen, with the powers of the world to come, the stronger has it left you. Such, so to speak, is the natural result of invigorated faculties, strung and braced in the conflict, and, let me add, such is the purely spiritual result of a new or renewed consciousness of the immediate presence of Christ. The Spirit then manifests Himself most distinctly, and this, as every manifestation is specially vouchsafed, in order that you might profit withal.

## SERMON VII.

### Sabbatic Rest.

"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath."
Mark ii. 27, 28.

This saying of our Lord establishes the principle by which all questions touching the observance of His own day ought to be decided. It declares the principle, indeed, so distinctly that it seems difficult to understand why controversies unknown to the early Church should have been raised in later ages, or why, once raised, they should have been carried on with so much heat and pertinacity that the word Sabbath, the very symbol of peace and rest, should have become a party word, an occasion of mutual charges and recriminations among Christians. At present the storms of controversy, which a few years since raged with unusual violence, have somewhat subsided, and certainly it is far from my intention to revive them; but there is still considerable danger lest the very principles, on which all earnest Christians are agreed, should be neglected, or involved in the discredit which attaches to discarded prejudices; and it appears desirable to take advantage of a season in this respect at least of comparative calm, and to inquire what great truths remain unshaken, what lessons for

our own guidance we may derive from the teaching of our Lord?

Now the strongest impression made by this text upon my own mind, when I consider it with reference to questions which have been agitated by controversialists, is, that the first and most practical principle which it announces has been systematically disregarded. The second principle indeed, that man was not made for the Sabbath, was one of extreme importance in our Lord's time; and in later ages, whenever the spirit of Judaism has found expression in morose observances, that part of the text has been used, and well used—used with vigour and effect to sweep away prejudices which disfigured and obscured the light of Christian liberty. It has done its work, and done it thoroughly, so far as regards the great body of educated believers in our Church. There may be families which retain somewhat of the gloom and punctiliousness which under Puritan influences made the day of rest a day of bondage; but there is a general tendency in the very opposite direction. Man certainly no longer feels that he was made for the Sabbath. To the most religious the Sabbath is a means, not an end; and with the disappearance of the prejudice against which that part of our Lord's saying was directed, the necessity of dwelling upon it is proportionately diminished. Of all things, the least necessary or expedient at present would be to argue among men of cultivated intelligence against overstrictness in the observance of the Lord's-day, or to prove that our Master has freed us from bondage to any portion of the ceremonial law.

But the other part of the statement, "The Sabbath was made for man," stands altogether on a different ground. Its importance is permanent and universal; it establishes not the exception, but the rule; it deals not with temporary and fluctuating prejudices, but with fixed, eternal principles. It puts us altogether in a different position with reference to the question, Why do I observe the Lord's-day? The old questions, What has a Christian to do with Jewish enactments? What to him is the ceremonial law? Why is our liberty to be narrowed by the opinions of bigots incapable of distinguishing between the spirit and the letter? All these had their use, as they certainly have had their misuse, in the past. But put the question in this form—The Sabbath was made for man; why then should man be deprived of it? If to the Jewish Church in its best ages, to its most enlightened seers, the Sabbath was a delight, holy and honourable, full of happy thoughts and feelings, a season of refreshment, of bodily repose and spiritual rejoicing, why should the Christian Church forfeit the privilege? If it was made for man, it must have been because man needed it; not, certainly, as a mere temporary provision for special purposes, but as a permanent blessing from the beginning of his existence upon earth to the time when, his earthly work being finished, he will enter into his eternal rest. What plausible reason, then, can be given why it should be abrogated, why it should be curtailed? The Sabbath was made for me, for mine, for my family, for my dependants, for all who are engaged in ministering to my wants: who shall interfere with my rights and their

rights? Who shall take from us one of God's first gifts to His creatures—a gift bestowed with a special regard to their physical and spiritual wants, and consecrated by His own example? Look at the question in this light, test the principle by its application to the facts of daily experience, to the wants of your own inner and outer life, and you will dismiss, as matters of exceedingly little importance to the man of common-sense, the greater part of the discussions which have filled large volumes of wearisome controversy, and which will remain unsettled so long as men differ in feelings and habits, and in the power of dealing with the accumulated masses of conflicting theories and ill-digested facts. What to us can it matter under what circumstances the gradual transfer of Sabbath observances from Saturday to Sunday took effect, all special and merely ceremonial forms disappearing in the transition, so long as we are satisfied that it was effected with the full concurrence of the Universal Church? If we know that now in the Lord's-day, its new and most significant designation, we have all that made the Sabbath a boon to man, a season in which the soul, free from earthly trammels, may realize its nearness and affinity to God—what to us can it matter that at a period of struggle, and of reaction good and conscientious, though narrow-minded, men sought to counteract licentious tendencies by recurrence to enactments which appertained altogether to a dispensation long since passed away? We are surely in a position to maintain the truth, to hold fast the good for which such men contended, without reference to their prejudices, without involving ourselves in their mistakes. Why, in short,

should we trouble ourselves with any question but this. Do I use for my own real benefit, for the benefit of all over whom I have any control, the Sabbath which was made for me, which my Saviour has claimed as His own; of which He is now, as ever, the Lord; which His Spirit, working in and through His Church, has associated for ever with the crowning fact of His religion, His resurrection from the dead? These are to my mind the questions which we are bound to consider as Christians, as men who have to work out our own salvation, whose duty it is, so far as may be possible, to communicate our blessings and convictions to our fellow-men.

Let us now apply the principle to some points of practical concernment, and consider its bearings upon the development of our inner man. The first point is happily one upon which all are agreed. We need not refer to theologians, or to the exponents of purely religious principles, for arguments to prove the blessing or the necessity of Sabbath rest; that the Sabbath was made for man, under all circumstances and in all ages, because it was essential to his well-being—moral, intellectual, and physical. Statesmen and men of science, moralists and physiologists, whatever they may think of the obligation, are unanimous as to the benefits. To this has been attributed, by severe utilitarian thinkers, the difference between a country inhabited by men full of bodily and mental vigour, and one inhabited by men sunk in bodily and mental decrepitude. "Therefore it is that we are not poorer, but richer, because for many ages we Englishmen have rested from our labour one day in

seven. That day is not lost. A process is then going on quite as important to the wealth of a nation as any process which is performed on more busy days. Man, the machine of machines—the machine compared with which all the contrivances of engineering genius are worthless—is repairing and winding up, so that he returns to his labours with clearer intellect, with livelier spirits, with renewed bodily vigour." What more need be said to prove that the Sabbath was made for man than that to deprive him of it would be to inflict the most serious damage upon the community, to consign vast masses of our hard-worked population to premature exhaustion, to decrepitude and decay? Only let us keep this fact in mind. Man has this day, holds it and enjoys it as a day of rest, simply because it was made for him; because it is God's gift, sanctioned and enforced as an imperative duty by the declaration of God's will. Whatever statesmen may deem of its advantages, or even of its necessity, its binding power upon the conscience, without which legislative enactments would be futile, is entirely owing to religion. Its observance is co-extensive with the religion of the Bible; its faithful and really beneficial observance with the purest development of the Christian faith. Whenever faith dies out or is corrupted, the observance ceases, or the blessing is converted into a curse; instead of bringing kindly renovation, it is made an occasion of ruinous and exhausting excitement. The Monday is sacrificed to give the man time to recover from the exhaustion of Sunday's dissipation. Let every man who feels that he needs the weekly rest, honestly

recognize his obligation to the Lord of the Sabbath, who, while He freed the day from aught which could make it burdensome or wearying, bequeathed it in its integrity as a season of perpetual refreshment to His people. Take it as a gift from Him, to be prized, cherished, scrupulously preserved from contamination, as a gift to you and yours, and it will remain with you as a perennial source of restorative and quickening influences; but nothing short of that conviction will really enable you to retain the substantial benefits of the institution. Here and there a man may be found of calm, cold temperament who, from merely prudential motives, may set apart a stated portion of his time for seasonable rest, and as a matter of convenience may choose that day when others may be most easily kept from intruding upon his leisure; but for men engaged heart and soul in the struggle for mastery, or for existence; for the man of action, or the man of thought; for the man whose family depends upon his exertions; for the statesman, the merchant, the lawyer, in nine cases out of ten it is simply impossible to shut out the world, with its excitements and its claims, impossible to keep a place for quiet breathing, unless his home is hedged in, protected by what those without may, if they choose, call religious prejudice, but which the Christian knows to be religious principle—by gratitude and duty to Him Who claims the Sabbath as His own.

But I pass on to a still more important application of the principle that the Sabbath was made for man. Above all things it was ordained because it was in-

dispensable to our spiritual growth. Our health, mental and bodily, depends upon the harmonious and complete development of all our faculties. The neglect of any power which belongs to the integrity of our nature leaves us stunted, deformed, liable to physical or mental disease, to subtle and overpowering temptations, such as daily consign multitudes to wretchedness; and this must especially be the result if that faculty be suffered to decay for want of its proper nourishment, which, as we have often had occasion to observe, constitutes the most special characteristic of man as distinguished from the brute. The religious instinct, the capacity and the desire of communion with the Divine, the reception and assimilation of spiritual truth—that we must never for a moment forget is the true distinctive mark of man; man with the upward-looking eye, man with his intellect in proportion to its elevation conversant with abstract truth, man with a heart and conscience responding and testifying to the truth of the living God. It is for man specially as such, man as a spiritual being, that the Sabbath was especially made, and so far as regards his noblest faculty, made not for its repose, for its suspension or temporary cessation from action, but for its active exercise, its perfect development, its continuous growth. The labourer, as such, whatever may be the field of his occupation, whether the toil and drudgery of manual work, or the far more exhausting struggle of intellectual efforts, ceases to be a mere labourer on the Sabbath-day. The Lord of that day, Who determines its obligations and dispenses its blessings, relieves him of the burden which he bears so long,

and which but for Christ he would bear hopelessly until he lays down his worn-out frame in the quiet grave. But the inner man, the spiritual man, as such, far from ceasing to act, acquires the full consciousness of himself, the full use of all his powers, when he consecrates that day to the purposes for which it was bestowed. Few of us may realize this fact thoroughly from our own experience, indeed all of us must be conscious how far we have been at the best from such a consecration of our Lord's own day; but just to the extent that we have done it, or seriously attempted to do it, we can satisfy ourselves that so it is. It is simply unreasonable to suppose that any of our faculties will attain to their full and healthy development unless special care and special seasons be appropriated to their culture; nor can one who trusts the Word of God, or tests that Word by the facts of inner experience or the accredited records of the past, doubt that, over and above the daily care which must be bestowed upon the noblest and loftiest principle of our human nature, one-seventh portion of the week is asserted, and is found, to be an indispensable condition of its healthy growth. It may be said, it is said most truly, that religion is not a thing apart from common life. It is a principle developed in action, in contact with daily cares, daily struggles, daily trials and temptations; its workings, its results, are essentially practical. Whatever a man's calling may be, his religion must be interwoven with all his occupations; it must penetrate, must leaven, must give a new character to all that he is or does. But we must bear this in mind also—the work, the result of religion, is

one thing; the inner life, the spiritual principle, is another. Without action, without constant action, the spiritual man speedily degenerates, becomes dreamy, superstitious, narrow-minded, isolated in thought and feeling from his fellow-men; but without contemplation, without devotional exercises, without certain frequently, nay, regularly recurring seasons for meditation and earnest study of the mighty truths of revelation, every man, however strong and honest his convictions may be, will lose sooner or later the distinctive feelings, the aspirations and impulses, which belong to the inner sphere of spiritual communion.

Will any one question the truth of this statement? If there was ever an age or country, a state of social or intellectual life, in which the heart and mind of man needed the Sabbath, as made for him by his Creator, as preserved for him by his Lord, assuredly it is that in which our lot is cast. The pursuits which seem at present to have special attraction for a large proportion of thinking men are in a direction which, if exclusively pursued, leads them into a sphere singularly remote from that in which spiritual emotions find a congenial element. This fact has been stated by a professor of the highest distinction in natural philosophy, not as a charge against his fellow-students, but as a point important to be kept before their own minds, and the minds of those who accuse them of indifference to the claims of spiritual truth. It is inconceivable that science in any department can be in itself antagonistic to truths which lie beyond its own proper domain. Science, indeed, would be singularly oblivious of the conditions under which it has

attained its high development, of the fact that it flourishes—I might say exists—at present, in those countries alone where civilization has been fostered and secured under the influences of Christianity, if such antagonism were possible. But, to whatever cause the fact may be attributed, it would be weak and disingenuous to deny that the all-engrossing study of physical science, both on the Continent and England, has in many cases issued in a state of mind and feeling in which, not merely the distinctive truths of our Christian faith, but the very foundations of natural religion are denied or contemptuously ignored. This may be a temporary evil, a movement on the upper currents of opinion, not reaching the great depth where the heart of Christendom throbs under the brooding and quickening Spirit of our God; but while it lasts the season is one of extreme peril for every mind susceptible to the magnetic influences of intellectual contact; it is a peril to be overcome under penalty of spiritual death. Overcome it will not be unless all counteracting influences are brought to bear on the spirit. A sound judgment will lead thoughtful men to discriminate carefully between the precious facts, the certain conclusions of science, and the ever-shifting and contradictory speculations of scientific men. They will welcome such help as is afforded by writers of the highest authority who have dealt with the advances of science in different directions, and will be specially on their guard against the encroachments which, as in the domain of nature so in the domain of thought, every form of energetic life is ever making or attempting. In such application of mental power the

thinker may find himself instructed and strengthened. No work is lost; in all labour there is profit; for all duties faithfully performed there is a sure reward. But, brethren, after all, the strength and life of religion have their source in the inner sphere; they come direct from God. The master truths with which they are concerned are objects of direct intuition; like all first truths, they are recognized by the higher reason, they are the basis, not the result, of demonstration, according to the old axiom of Aristotle, *αἱ ἀρχαὶ ἀναποδεικταί*; religious truths are discovered by the spirit, attested by their effects upon the heart and life; and it was that we might apprehend them, retain them, and apply them, that all devout exercises, all seasons of spiritual refreshment were ordained, that the Sabbath was made.

Thanks be to God we have that Sabbath still. It is our Lord's own day; because He is our Lord it is our day. It has been endangered by the prejudices alike of its maintainers and of its opponents. At present there may be a tendency to a reactionary movement, threatening the abrogation of its characteristic observances; but if you feel that it was made for you, made to preserve your bodies, your minds, from premature exhaustion; made to surround your homes with an atmosphere of peace and joy; made that your dependents, your poor, overworked brethren, may for a season breathe freely; made, above all, that you may cherish the precious germ of spiritual life which stamps you as God's true children—then, mindful of your peculiar position and responsibilities among the representatives of England's intellectual children, maintainers of its time-honoured

laws, you will take your stand quietly and firmly against the tide of ungodliness, and will show by your words and works, by regular attendance at God's worship, and by devout acceptance of His most precious gifts, that you are true servants of Him Who is Lord of the Sabbath-day.

## SERMON VIII.

### The Dignity of Prayer.

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.'
James v. 16.

The truth which St. James thus states with characteristic simplicity and force is bound up with the deepest and most interesting questions which can occupy the minds of thoughtful believers. Prayer is the act which proves, as no other act can prove, a man's living consciousness of God's nearness to him, and of his own nearness to God. It implies a true realization of the mutual relationship between the human and the Divine. The principles from which it springs, to which it owes its dignity and its efficacy, may profitably engage our attention on this and the next Lord's-day, if we are careful when the discussion touches upon controversial subjects to avoid the controversial spirit, and to consider every point with reference to our own spiritual wants, to its bearing upon the development and rectification of our inner life.

There is a close connection between this subject and that which I brought before you last Sunday. I then considered the Lord's-day with especial reference to its benefits to man; above all, as securing a season and

opportunity of spiritual growth. But the season, the opportunity, would be useless unless the *principle* of growth were secured; and the sabbatic rest, however perfect and however advantageous to the bodily and intellectual energies of man, would be thrown away as regards its highest and most sacred purposes, unless the life, of which prayer is the action and manifestation, were truly ours. The Lord's-day supplies, so to speak, a special sphere within which the inner principle may be periodically examined, refreshed, and invigorated; but the Spirit of the living God is at once the fountain spring of the life itself, and the element within which and by which it is preserved and developed; and prayer, devout and, in St. James's words, effectual and fervent, is the breath by which its vitality is proved, by means of which the soul receives the influences of the quickening Spirit, and attains to its perfect growth. I will endeavour this morning to show the dignity of prayer as the characteristic and distinctive act of redeemed humanity, that which proves man to be in very truth a child of God, and partaker of the Divine nature, reserving for another occasion the question of its efficacy and of its reconcilableness with the attributes of Him with Whom, as is declared by the same apostle who attests that efficacy, there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Last Sunday I stated incidentally a fact which, once admitted, as admitted it must be on careful and candid examination, puts prayer in its true position, and vindicates its surpassing dignity as the very highest function or energy of the human spirit. I mean that

in the religious instinct—which, accordingly as it is developed in the affections, the mind, and the will, is denominated devotion, religious knowledge, or religious principle—is to be found the true and the most perfectly demonstrable, if not the only demonstrable, difference between man and every living creature upon earth. If that point be once established in our minds, no doubt will remain that prayer, which is the very consummation and full expression of the religious instinct, when rightly directed and divested of all selfish or superstitious adjuncts, must be the very noblest, as the most distinctive, act of humanity. The point, as all will admit, is of exceeding importance; and inasmuch as to my own mind this consideration has brought the most complete conviction, and has removed altogether some of the most painful and perplexing difficulties suggested by the progress of late investigations into the origin and characteristics of the human race, I will attempt to state, with all possible brevity, the grounds on which it appears to rest.

Look at man in body, soul, and spirit, in his acts, feelings, and thoughts, and you have undoubtedly an irresistible and indelible impression that he stands altogether apart in creation. There is no reason to fear that any amount of scientific speculation, any array of scientific observations, will ever obliterate or practically obscure that impression. It is an intuitive, direct, and absolute conviction. Man is man, and not a brute; he is not the development of a brute. So speaks our inner consciousness, and so it will speak to every natural and unsophisticated

descendant of Adam to the end of time. But when we inquire, as men of thought cannot help inquiring, in what that absolute and impassable difference actually consists, and can be proved to consist, we are, I will not say hopelessly perplexed, but certainly unable to establish a criterion which commands universal consent, so long as we take our stand exclusively on physical or even intellectual grounds. We may have, as I have myself, and as I doubt not nearly all whom I address have, a strong conviction that in points determinable by physical science there is a true and absolute difference—a difference not of degree, but of kind—between man and the creatures which approach to him most closely in structure and in powers. I doubt not that we all recognize an essential difference between reason and instinct. We accept thankfully the proofs by which those men of science, whose convictions are in harmony with our inner light, sustain the principle. But after all it is a fact that many honest searchers after truth, if they do not dispute the conclusion, yet distrust the arguments by which it is often supported. They assert, and it is hard to disprove the assertion, that feelings, affections, and even powers of thought, akin to our own, exist in other creatures, though in an imperfect and rudimentary form; that the limits between instinct and reason cannot be absolutely defined; that memory, comparison, reflection, in some animals, and in forms not referable to an unvarying law of nature, produce acts and results not satisfactorily explained on any theory generally received by physiologists. I state all this, not as at all acquiescing in such

statements, but simply as a fact which it would be unwise and uncandid to ignore. I state it moreover because, whatever force any one may attach to such objections, they are wholly without force when applied to the religious principle. Whatever else is doubtful, this at least stands firm. Religion is altogether a new thing, apart from all other processes in the development of creation. The conception of God, the sense of dependence upon God, the consciousness of His being, of His power, of His nearness—all this is absolutely peculiar to man. It constitutes a perfect line of demarcation between him and the highest creatures. As organized life constituted an epoch in the world's development; as when consciousness came with the first animal it constituted another; so also the capacity of religion, when it came into the world with man, constituted another, equally distinct and unmistakable. No one dreams that any creature but man has the merest rudiment of the principle, aught that could be developed into the slightest resemblance with it. No one believes that man, however fallen, corrupted, degraded he may be, loses altogether the capacity of religious feeling and religious thought. We have here therefore a criterion absolutely conclusive to every one who admits the existence and feels the power of what is called the religious instinct. It is one moreover which, though it may be disputed, cannot be disproved, even by those who, with the Positivists, hold that instinct itself is a stage, a transitional movement in the progress of intellectual development. For suppose man can satisfy himself with

the very strangest of all theories, that although the religious instinct exists universally, or generally, although it is most strongly developed, as all history and experience teaches, in the master races of mankind, aye, and in the master spirits of those races, the true lords of thought, yet that nevertheless it is but a delusion—still the fact remains unshaken that, delusion or not, it is peculiar to man, the one faculty, power, or endowment of which we can absolutely affirm that it is not shared by, and that it cannot be communicated to, the brute.

There is only one serious objection which can be made to this conclusion, and it is the more worth consideration, since it suggests some of the most convincing of all arguments in support of what, as I doubt not, is the absolute truth. It is asserted that if the religious instinct, of which the most certain result and proof is the act or habit of prayer, were in truth an especial characteristic of man pertaining to the very substance, not merely to the development of his nature, it could not die out altogether; it could always be traceable, proved to exist in some shape or other, even when its most obvious effects are not discernible. But, as some assert, it does die out, every trace disappears; the spirit neither has, nor feels the want of, religious impulses or aspirations, and this in cases selected from the very opposite extremes of humanity. Of some savages it may be said God is not in all their thoughts; they neither love nor fear the Divine: of some sensualists, nay, it is to be feared of a large proportion, the same thing may be truly asserted.

They succeed, with more or less of effort, in stifling the obtrusive and unwelcome convictions of earlier days; and the cessation of prayer leaves apparently no aching void in their hearts. What shall be said, too, of the mere intellectualist, who can assert that he has no need of the hypothesis of a God to account for the phenomena, physical or moral, of the universe; to whom the majesty, order, and indications of wisdom and beneficence in earth and heaven do not speak of a loving and controlling Will? What shall we say to this? May we not on the one hand say, that although in the extremest cases it may not be possible to prove that the religious instinct, though latent, though deformed and discarded, still exists, it is equally impossible to disprove it. In fact, the wildest and most grovelling superstitions among the fetish worshippers of Africa, and the still stranger forms of credulity which even now, in the midst of the enlightenment of our age of science, are prevalent in circles under the influences of intellectual culture, can scarcely be accounted for save on the supposition that a deep and ineradicable instinct, when thwarted and perverted, finds expression, and attests its vitality, in an abnormal growth of superstitious errors. And on the other hand, may we not say that although the religious instinct in its normal and healthy state, in the state in which it can be recognized and appreciated, belongs to the integrity of our nature, it may decay and die out to all outward appearances, leaving the man incomplete, but still a man so long as he retains the mere capacity of spiritual renovation. So the bodily powers may be paralysed; so may the

intellectual power be weakened, confused, leaving a man a mere wreck, but still a man; for it is not the exercise or even the conscious possession of this or that faculty, however noble and indispensable to the full integrity of our nature, but it is the inherent and natural capacity, which constitutes the characteristic of the race, and which makes man truly man. Now that the capacity for religion does actually remain may be proved by two great facts. The one fact is that, when spiritual death has seemed to be complete, when the habit, the want, the very perception of the elementary movements of spiritual life have ceased, have been utterly lost, nay, even when they cannot be proved ever to have been developed, some of the very strongest cases of conversion have occurred. Take the period when spiritual manifestations have passed like an electric current over vast masses of humanity, and you will observe that they have for the most part been immediately preceded by a season of absolute torpor, a season when spiritual death seemed to have been consummated. Such a period was that when the preaching of the Cross created a soul under the ribs of death, in the imperial and intellectual heathenism of the ancient world; or again when, within the memory of living man, the waters of life were poured forth freely over the barren wastes of modern infidelity. But in fact every tremor which shakes the soul of a criminal, every movement of unwelcome thought in the spirit of a sensualist, every misgiving, still more every half-suppressed yearning and aspiration, which stirs the mind longing for repose and living communion, and seeking it in vain in the midst

of intellectual excitement; nay more, every attempt to silence such feelings bears a witness which may be neglected, but cannot be disproved, to the existence of that instinct which brings man's spirit into contact with God. And should even this be questioned, I would appeal to another fact—the fact that the child of a man who is himself utterly impervious to spiritual impressions brings with it into the world an unimpaired capacity of spiritual life. Whence could that be derived, how transmitted, if not through its progenitors, by the well-known law of atavism? How preserved, save that it belongs to the very substance of our nature? Take the child of a savage, a sensualist, or a materialist, and who will doubt that it can learn—learn as naturally and as surely as it can learn anything else which lies within the natural scope of its faculties—to know, to fear, to love God, and to give utterance to spiritual emotions in prayer?

One other point appears to be peculiarly interesting, and is to my mind conclusive. It is, that when men, from whatever cause, have given up the elementary principles of religion, and have lost or suppressed the religious instinct, they do also for the most part more or less explicitly deny that there is any essential distinction between man and the brute. It becomes to them once more a distinction, not of kind, but of degree. Belief in man as man stands or falls with belief in God. This seems natural enough in the savage. Without theorizing on the subject, he recognizes in the brute creatures counterparts of himself; at the most he feels he is *primus inter pares*—superior in craft or force to

the brutes over whom he tyrannizes, but with whom he lives as one of themselves. But it seems passing strange that in the most advanced stage of intellectual cultivation some at least of the exclusive votaries of reason should arrive at the same conclusion. Now leaving the general arguments by which this view is supported to those whom it specially concerns, to physiologists and natural philosophers, who I doubt not can maintain their own position on purely scientific grounds, I would simply call your attention to the extreme significance of the fact. To me, and as I believe to you, the fallacy of a course of reasoning which issues in a denial of man's special characteristic is self-evident; and if such reasoning proceeds from, or is all but inextricably bound up with, a disbelief in the existence of the one peculiarity which we have now been considering, it supplies the strongest possible attestation to its importance and its reality. Look at the statement closely. Take away the religious instinct, and we are told that some of the keenest and closest observers, lovers doubtless of truth, regardless we may hope of any considerations but truth, cannot recognize man as a being apart and single in creation. What stronger proof can be adduced that we have in this religious instinct the truest, the highest, the most demonstrable characteristic of our race—that which makes us recognize in every man a true brother, a true child of the universal Father, a true recipient and representative of the Divine nature infused into humanity when God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. And if this be so, who can question, the sur-

passing dignity of the act which demonstrates the vitality and power of that instinct, when, divested of all superstitious error, the soul pours out its inmost emotions, and is raised into conscious communion with God in the solemn intercourse of prayer?

But is there not somewhat of presumption in such an assertion? may it not create or foster a tendency to spiritual pride? Nay, brethren, the sense of that dignity is not merely compatible with the deepest and truest humility; it is absolutely inseparable from it. Man must be thoroughly humbled before he can come into the presence of God; he cannot pass through the narrow gate which alone gives access to the sanctuary, without laying aside all upon which he is tempted to pride himself in comparison with his fellows. The pride of rank, of personal and intellectual superiority, can have no place in that Presence. And when in prayer he realizes, as then alone he can realize, the nearness of God to his soul, all personal feelings are overwhelmed and lost in the sense of the infinite greatness, the absolute holiness of Him Whom he adores. The nearer to God, the higher and holier the nature of man, the more complete is that sense of utter abasement. Hence a man like Job, who in hours when the light of God's countenance was obscured could utter words bordering on self-righteousness, in whom the consciousness of personal integrity was then the predominant feeling, is constrained to cry out, "I have heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Hence a Daniel, of all characters in

the Old Testament most singularly free from the taint of human frailty, when he saw this great vision, and knew himself to be in direct contact with the Divine, exclaims, "There remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength." Hence St. John, of all disciples the nearest in love and spiritual conformity to his Lord, when he saw Him in His glory fell at His feet as dead. Nor is this humility felt only with reference to God, in the light of Whose countenance every speck of human frailty and guilt stands revealed in all its hatefulness; but it is felt, if less strongly yet unmistakably, with reference to man. When we really do pray with the heart, we feel above all things that we are breathing in an element where spiritual life is all in all; where there is a perfect equality between all who come near to God and offer to Him the perfect holocaust of themselves, their bodies, souls, and spirits, as a reasonable and acceptable sacrifice, for the Saviour's merits, and in their Saviour's name. If we could sound the inmost feelings of men truly absorbed in prayer, we should find that those who have most temptations to self-esteem, on the score of personal and intellectual superiority, feel far most deeply their own utter unworthiness; that they look, not indeed with envy, but with a strange blending of abasement and admiration upon those who, in their natural lowliness and unconsciousness of aught which could suggest a feeling of pride, come with simple faith, and without the symptoms of an inner struggle, to seek for mercy and for peace from their God. But it may be said, whatever may be the feelings

of such a man when he measures himself with fellow-worshippers, it is scarcely possible that the sense of his peculiar privileges should not inspire presumption, when he compares himself with those who live in avowed alienation from God. Nay, brethren, one who truly knows and loves His Saviour sees in every man an object of His redeeming love. In the ignorant and guilty he recognizes unconscious heirs of a noble inheritance, royal children wandering in misery, while their Father's palace is open to their approach, dethroned and self-exiled princes to whom, though they know it not, a restoration is ever possible, their true home ever accessible. Burning love to every creature that partakes his own spiritual nature swallows up all other feelings, when a man is drawn into this inner sphere of spiritual communion, when he bows down in lowly adoration before the throne of Him Who inspires and accepts the offering of effectual fervent prayer.

## SERMON IX.

### The Efficacy of Prayer.

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James v. 16.

On the last Sunday of Easter term I dwelt on the *dignity* of prayer as the action and manifestation of the spiritual life, or, as some physiologists call it, the religious instinct, which constitutes the characteristic difference between man and every other creature on this earth. This morning we may consider some of the more prominent facts which prove its *efficacy*, and may show that such efficacy is not merely reconcilable with the attributes of the unchangeable Being to whom prayer is addressed, but that it follows as a natural consequence from those attributes, regarded in their bearings upon the moral nature and the destinies of man.

One point seems at once obvious and incontestible. If we are really convinced that prayer is a natural and genuine manifestation of a divinely implanted instinct, we arrive by a short and sure process at a practical conviction of its efficacy. The analogy of all creation teaches us that no truly instinctive desire is without its correlative object. It is given,

and it is elicited, that it may be satisfied. When we find any species of animals seeking, in the Psalmist's words, its food from God, and seeking it in vain, having appetites for which, in the ordinary course of His providence, no sustenance is provided, then, and then only, may we entertain the notion that the longings of the purest and noblest portion of our nature are excited only that they may be frustrated. Such a notion is wholly incompatible with belief in the wisdom and goodness of God, with the principle that He rules all creation by unvarying laws; for if any law be unvarying and universal, it must be the law of love—love which is identified with the very essence of God; and if anything can be conceived as most absolutely contravening that law, it would be that He should sport with the deepest and tenderest feelings of His creatures, and create or allow aspirations which He disregards. This conviction is in fact direct and, so to speak, intuitive; it is inseparable from faith in God. The religious man, whatever may be his state of intellectual development, possesses it without any process of reasoning. When he is able to examine into its grounds, he finds it in perfect accordance with reason, but it anticipates the process by which it is demonstrated and confirmed. I pray because God bids me pray; because He gives me the spirit of prayer. I know that every good desire which He permits it must be His will to gratify; fervent prayer must therefore be effectual. So says, or so feels, every true child of God, ignorant on other matters as he may be, untaught to reason out or to explain the processes by which he

arrives at this practical conclusion. And he is safe, he is right; he rises at once to the highest point which the spiritualized intelligence can reach after years of painful and exhausting struggle. If we chose to take our stand here, without troubling ourselves about speculative difficulties, we should not justly incur the imputation of prejudice, nor should we fail to secure the very highest ends of our probationary state.

But, after all, we live in a period of mental excitement, acted upon by influences which, were it desirable, it would be impossible to exclude. Well-assured that ours is a reasonable faith, members of a Church which has never shunned discussion, and which teaches us not only to hold fast, but to give a reason for the faith which is in us, we are bound, when fairly challenged, to consider objections to the principles on which, for our part, we are well content to rest. And if we put aside those objections which are mere cavils, urged only with a wish to pain or perplex believers, we may always look for one or the other of two advantageous results from a candid consideration of an opponent's arguments. We may learn to modify our own opinions or practices so far as they do not necessarily flow from the principles which are the foundation of all sound faith; or stronger and more convincing arguments may be elicited in the course of discussion, which, but for such objections, would not have occurred to our minds. Faith is never stronger, clearer, more self-possessed and confident, than when it has examined its evidences and principles in a season of controversy and trial.

Such should be the result of a fair inquiry into the grounds on which rests the efficacy of fervent prayer.

The main ground on which I would take my stand is one which has been long occupied and vigorously defended. If true, it is none the worse for not being new. I present it because I believe it to be impregnable, and because, if you carefully follow out the consequences which it involves, you will find it suffice for all practical and essential purposes. It is this. Prayer expresses and partly effects a change in the relation between man, who offers it, and the Almighty, to whom it is addressed. That change involves the fulfilment of all that is really desirable, all that is really for man's good, that which alone he can seek for in spiritual communion. God is unchangeable, unchangeable in all His attributes, which are indeed but different aspects of one unchangeable essence. He governs the universe by the constant, unintermitting action of His sovereign will; and He governs with one fixed and absolute purpose, the manifestation of His goodness and love. Man is changeable, moved by a continuous series of varying impulses—either moving in different directions, or moving onward towards some definite end; but moving always, never abiding in one stay. Prayer determines and marks the direction of that movement. In a soul smitten by the sense of guilt it marks a change of direction; in a soul once converted it proves the strength and vitality of the power by which it is moved. In both cases it brings, or represents the bringing of, the will into conformity with the will of God. So long as the will of the creature is in oppo-

sition to the will of God the movements of the universe are against him; when it is in harmony with that will all things must needs work together for his good. He is in accord with what are truly named the everlasting harmonies. His prayer therefore must be effectual; it must avail much; not because it alters the Divine will, but because it removes all impediments between itself and the full operation of God's love. The desires of a depraved nature cannot be gratified without bringing it more completely within the sphere where natural agencies become the unconscious, and because unconscious, the inexorable ministers of retributive justice: but the desires of a spiritualized nature are the very gift of God, the movements of a heart stirred by His own breath. He accepts and He fulfils them, not indeed according to man's imperfect knowledge, but according to His perfect knowledge of all that they imply. Men of speculative minds may agitate the question whether God fulfils such desires by interposing in the course of nature, directing the action of natural laws, or whether He effects the same result by bringing the nature and circumstances of the seeker into harmony with that outward series of events, which are the ordinary manifestations of His will; but it is a question which will hardly occur to one who draws near to the throne of grace with a heartfelt recognition of his weakness and ignorance, and with absolute reliance on his Father's wisdom and love. The true efficacy of prayer consists in its bringing to the offerer the truest, the most perfect blessings which infinite Love can bestow. As for temporal benefits, they are granted

or withheld, not for their own sake, but for the sake of spiritual ends, at the time, and according to the measure which is best for the heart, best for the development of the inner man. A man may pray without knowing what is really good for him; he may pray for what, were it granted, would be detrimental to himself or those whom he loves. Such indeed must needs be very frequently the case, since our best aspirations are mingled with lower and meaner feelings, and the most far-sighted very often mistake utterly what is permanently best for them. Such prayers cannot of course be granted, so far as regards their outward purport; but they are not disregarded or ineffectual. In the very act of making them the spirit undergoes a further change, which brings it ever more completely into that state of conformity with God's will, which is in truth the very highest end for which the spirit of prayer is vouchsafed. We conclude therefore, and do not see how this conclusion can be disputed, that the unchangeableness of the divine nature is in fact the condition and the assurance of the efficacy of fervent prayer.

Here, however, we must keep certain considerations and cautions steadily in our minds. It is of course obvious that hearty prayer is impossible without a lively realization of the personality of God, of His goodwill and love, and of His ever ready sympathy with the feelings of His rational creatures. But we are told that such a conviction depends upon, and is bound up with, what are called anthropomorphic conceptions of the Deity; that they attribute to Him who is without

parts or passions, inaccessible to emotions which imply change or modification, the characteristics of man—of man indeed in his noblest and most attractive aspect, but still of man as such, subject to variable impulses, to-day not as he was yesterday, or as he will be on the morrow. Now there is real danger lest on the one hand, admitting the force and accepting the consequences of such representations, we should be shaken in that conviction which alone inspires or admits of prayer; and on the other hand lest, retaining the conviction, we should take an untenable position in arguing with opponents. The first danger, as it appears to me, will be obviated if we keep this truth constantly in mind. Those conceptions of God which attribute to Him our own best, holiest, and tenderest feelings, are only incorrect because they are inadequate. We represent God, nay, our heavenly Father represents Himself to us, under these forms, because it is impossible for us to conceive Him at all under any other form. It is perfectly true that as man advances in intelligence, the conception is modified. At different ages of humanity, the representations of the invisible Godhead, speaking only of those which are sanctioned by His own Word, undergo considerable change. As we have passed ourselves from childhood to youth, from youth to mature age, we have realized the attributes of God under forms exceedingly varied; and unquestionably to the very last these forms bear the impress of our subjectivity. The conception of the loftiest and most spiritualized intellect is as truly human as that of a child, who is taught to worship in a heavenly Father the perfection of wisdom, power, and

love; but the conception of the one and of the other differs from the reality only because, and only so far as, it is necessarily inadequate. While therefore we recognize, as every thinking man must do, increasingly with every onward stage of mental development, a radical and inevitable imperfection in our views of the Deity, we must be increasingly careful not to lose our hold upon the truth itself; not to discard, together with the sensuous conceptions of childhood, or the emotional conceptions of youth, the deep living conception of our Father's love.

So too with regard to the government of the universe. We may use words and accept statements touching the dispensations of Providence which will lay us open to the charge of superstition; we may sometimes unconsciously represent the relations between God and His creation under too mechanical and external aspects; and we shall do well ever to bear in mind that all expressions on that subject should be carefully weighed and guarded, and used with a frank admission of our incompetency to utter or to conceive the exact truth. But, brethren, let nothing induce us to surrender the truth itself. The universe with all its movements and forces is absolutely under the control of God. What the will of man is to his actions, that, but in an infinitely higher degree, the will of God is to that assemblage of forces which move, regulate, and, if we are to believe some of the very deepest observers, constitute the very essence of the visible creation. Its laws are but the expression of His will; unvarying because that will is one with unchangeable wisdom and

love. Without that conviction, as we admit freely, prayer is irrational. If secondary causes are all in all, an appeal to the Cause of causes is out of the question. Argument between those who believe and those who reject that first principle is impossible; there is no common ground on which they can take their stand. The attempt at discussion would be as futile as that of a conflict between creatures existing in different elements. But so long as the conviction has any hold upon a spirit, perplexed though it may be by interminable speculations, prayer cannot be altogether suppressed; while it exists in its integrity, prayer will flow forth freely, with confidence in its efficacy, with the certainty of its bringing the human into living union with the Divine.

And let me speak frankly upon a point of great delicacy, involved doubtless in some difficulty, but of practical importance to any one who is moved by the spirit of prayer. With regard to all temporal objects it appears wiser, safer, more in accordance with God's Word, especially with that portion which gives the perfect manifestation of His nature and revelation of His will, to pray generally for ends, rather than specially for means. Means we doubt not, as well as ends, are not only absolutely within the region where Divine interposition is conceivable, but they are objects of natural desire, and cannot but be present to our mind in offering prayer. In fact all the circumstances and events of our existence on earth are in a true sense but means. Properly speaking there is but one end towards which all others converge, in which they meet and are consummated, even the restoration of the soul to per-

fect union with God. For means we cannot but pray; we have abundant authority, abundant examples, and even commands, in Holy Writ. We may pray heartily for the continuance of earthly blessings, for the removal or mitigation of temporal afflictions from ourselves and from those whom we love. The heart is enlarged and softened, at once humbled and raised, by the sense of filial dependence and trust which such prayers imply, elicit, and develope; never does a Christian realize more thoroughly the sympathy of his Saviour than when, following that Saviour's example, he pours out burning supplications on behalf of a beloved one. Only we must remember that all such objects of prayer are in reality not ends, but means; and that if in our inmost hearts we insist upon them, demand them, as we read that some devout men have done, as proofs of Divine acceptance, we should incur most serious peril. The demand if made unconditionally, without the fullest recognition of our utter ignorance as to what in temporal matters is best for ourselves and others, involves a certain distrust in Him to whom it is addressed. When it is offered ineffectually, the result, as recorded in many biographies of pious but ill-informed men, is ofttimes a terrible reaction; faith undergoes a great shock; if not overthrown it is seriously impaired. And prayers for means by which those means may themselves be secured, appear, to say the least, to border on presumption. I confess that I shrink from supplications for change of weather, for success in enterprises not demonstrably bound up with the accomplishment of God's will, in short, for any special supplications which are not

warranted by explicit declarations in Holy Writ, and by the express directions of Christ's Church. It is not that we should attach the slightest weight to the assertion that any modification of the course of nature is incompatible with the attributes of the unchangeable God, Who, for aught we know, and as we may reasonably believe, makes the devout expression of our wants a condition of satisfying them; but then we should feel that anything approaching to a dictation of the way in which He may see fit to accomplish His gracious purposes, is presumptuous, and to the last degree irrational.

It is very possible that in asking for some special interposition we are praying against the very means by which those purposes are in course of accomplishment; and at the same time, instead of acquiring or strengthening the habit of devout and grateful submission to His will, we may be concentrating our desires upon an object which He may disapprove. Such prayers, when offered without specific authority, appear, on the whole, opposed to all rational conceptions of the relations between God and His creatures, who ought above all things to rejoice that they are dependent on His loving will. Applying this to our personal experience, it seems evident that in praying for the attainment of some specific object of desire we may be praying, that is, bringing our will in its highest function, into active opposition to the processes which God specially appoints for the correction and formation of our character. Our faults require sterner and sharper discipline than we are ever willing to bear. Our best energies are drawn

out in the struggles with affliction and privation. The heroic spirit, whatever may be its sphere of action, is nurtured amidst storms. The sweetest and most winning graces are elicited in seasons of sorrow and bereavement. The first lively consciousness of the spiritual principle, as some of us well know from our own experience, is often awakened amidst the heart-searchings of bitter, and, so far as regards all earthly sources, utterly inconsolable grief. Prayer then, prayer earnest, impassioned, importunate, will and must flow forth from the crushed spirit; it has the full sanction, it has the example, of our Lord. But it must ever be offered with an explicit recognition of our ignorance, of the fact that with regard to all temporal wants we know not for what, or how we ought to pray; and that one end only is in itself, and for itself, and in all circumstances, absolutely to be desired—even the perfect restoration of our nature in conformity with Christ and in living union with God.

In all this the limit may be practically hard to trace, and harder to observe; but we may take this as an unerring rule—the farther we go in absolute acquiescence in the Divine will in regard to all changes and chances of this mortal life, the nearer we shall approach that one true end. In spiritual matters we have the further assurance, that prayers for the means and for the end are equally permitted, and must be equally effectual. In fact it is not too much to say that the rule which applies to the former case may be reversed without danger in the latter. If, as great theologians have agreed with other thinkers, the true end of all human

aspirations, including those which are sanctioned by God's revealed will, be after all no other than perfect blessedness, our desires for that end may possibly be blended with much of human infirmity and human error. Old and imperfect conceptions may unconsciously affect and misdirect our longings for that which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. But in praying for all means of grace, that they may be abundantly bestowed and thoroughly effectual, we are absolutely sure that our will is in accordance with the Divine will. For what is that will but our sanctification, that we should be pure, upright, truthful, sincere in holding, without offence in maintaining, the faith, rooted and grounded in love, and so growing up into a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ?

## SERMON X.

### Unity of the Church.

"Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."—John x. 16.

Two great questions occupy the thoughts of earnest men in all countries, most seriously in those where the human intelligence has been most thoroughly developed, where the conscience and affections are brought into fullest play. The first great question concerns the universe. Whether or not it is the expression of a supreme will, that will being absolutely identified with the fundamental principles of righteousness and love? The other question concerns the Christian Church, viewed in its entire extent and in reference to its charter, as set forth in the declaration of our Saviour after His resurrection. Is it or is it not essentially one, as contemplated in the light of that declaration, repeated in various forms at the close of each Gospel and in the opening chapter of the Acts? Both questions bring us into contact with great difficulties, and if studied without due regard to the conditions under which the inquiry should be pursued will certainly issue in serious perplexity. Both appertain to the highest sphere of thought,

intellectual and spiritual; both encounter special obstacles in a sphere haunted by phantoms, so to speak—the idols, as Bacon would say, not of the cave, but of the dizzy heights nearest to the spiritual realm. That neither question will be completely answered so long as it is dealt with exclusively by the discursive faculties may be admitted; but that both will be cleared up substantially, and sufficiently for all practical and really important purposes, cannot be doubted, provided we start from the right point and pursue the right course, distinctly indicated by our great Teacher, the Lord alike of the material and of the spiritual world. And on looking at the two questions we see that if we can arrive at a satisfactory conclusion touching the latter, the difficulties which beset the former will disappear. It is possible that a man accepting the unity and Divine government of the universe may yet be at a loss when he turns his attention to the aspect of the Christian Church. But it is not possible that any man discerning in Christendom distinct marks of the presence and guiding power of one Supreme Head, should remain for a moment in doubt as to the other question. He will need no further demonstration of the unity of the universe, of its absolute subordination to the will of one God. Now it appears to me that if we consider well the bearings of our Lord's words, recorded in the text, we shall find a clue to some very grave perplexities. We shall be brought nearer to the heart of our Lord, sharing more fully the love which is shed abroad from that heart upon the souls for which He died.

Let us first look to the exact meaning of the text.

Who or what are the other sheep of whom our Lord speaks? and what is the fold to which He says they do not actually belong? There ought to be no doubt as to either question. Those sheep are certainly all those individuals whom Christ owned ever as the Son of God, whom when lost He purchased by His blood as the Son of man. He speaks of them as already His own, His own not less loved because wanderers from the fold, lost in the wide wilderness. That is one great point; it teaches us to see in every human being one for whom Christ died, who, whether alienated or not from Him by outward circumstances and by inward perversity, is still Christ's purchased possession, capable of receiving Him, a creature for whom no pains should be spared to open the way of restoration to his true Lord.

What again is the fold spoken of in the first clause? Observe the word there used, *αὐλή*. It denotes in Homer an inclosure within which the cattle are assembled, by which they are protected, separated from other flocks; and therefore in this passage a distinct community, consisting at the time exclusively of Hebrews. This fold is in fact the Hebrew Church, as it existed at the time when these words were spoken by our Saviour. Hitherto His care had been specially directed, all but exclusively confined, to its members; He came first to the lost sheep of the fold of Israel. The sheep that are not of that fold are of course the Gentiles, whom here our Lord no less distinctly claims as His own. They are to be brought home precisely under the same condition as those who were the first members of the Hebrew Christian Church. That condition is

simply obedience to the voice of Christ. He will speak to them outwardly by the persons to whom He entrusts the ministration of the Word, by the apostles, their successors, and all Christian missionaries who are faithful to their trust; more specially by His own utterances recorded in the gospels and expounded in the doctrinal writings of the New Testament. But He will speak to them inwardly, come into immediate personal contact with the conscience of every individual, by His Spirit, ever present where His work is done. All who hear that voice and follow its guidance will be brought within the pale of salvation. Here, however, you have to note what seems an oversight on the part of our translators. Instead of the word *αὐλή*, rendered correctly in the first clause "fold," or inclosure, the Greek has a very different expression, *ποίμνη*, that is, not "fold," but "flock." The difference is very considerable. The fold represents a distinct community; the flock represents the whole congregation of true believers. They are one, not as a separate community, with its own governors, bye-laws, so to speak, peculiarities inseparable from the position of a local or national Church, but one in virtue of their common relation to a single Shepherd, one Head caring equally for all, acknowledged equally by all, uniting all by one inward principle, governing all by the same fundamental laws.

If the whole body of Christians were to form a single community, not merely with the same principles and relations to a single Lord, but with the same external forms, organization, and customs, the necessity of a single governing body, whether exercising its functions

through formally appointed chiefs, or, in still closer imitation of the unseen ideal, concentrating all its powers in a single head, could scarcely be denied. Such misconception has in fact led to some of the most formidable evils which have affected the state of Christendom. The encroachments of the Papacy followed as a logical consequence from the acceptance of this one error; encroachments not so much owing to the ambition of individuals, placed in a false position, as to the very general recognition of the absolute necessity of an outward, visible, and compact unity of Christendom. Every national Church, every distinct community, constitutes a separate fold; within that fold there must be unity of organization, unity of action, submission to a recognized authority, substantial unity in forms of public worship. But the whole congregation of Christians includes all members in all folds, includes all who hear the voice of Christ, who accept the fundamental laws of His kingdom, who are united to Him by the operation of one eternal Spirit, who, outwardly divided as they must be, outwardly opposed as they may seem to be, are yet inwardly bound to each other by the spiritual bond which makes them one in Christ. To realize this as the true state of Christendom is no small difficulty; to discern the inner life under all diversities of manifestation involves no small exertion of the spiritual faculty; yet the difficulty must be met and overcome, the exertion must be made and maintained, if we would rightly appreciate the work of Christ, and see clearly our own duties towards all who are partakers of the one great name.

Having this object distinctly present to our minds, we may now consider some points which may guide us to a satisfactory result. Looking broadly at the actual condition of Christendom, we are of course struck most forcibly and painfully by its wide divergencies and outward antagonisms. These are evils not to be disguised or palliated. They prove, what indeed Scripture leads us to expect, that the corruption of our nature is but slowly and partially overcome by the influences of religion. Taking the most favourable examples, the churches, nay, the individuals who are most earnest in their devotion to Christ, we find that differences of opinion, of custom, of religious forms, separate them, and bring them often into collision. In fact, burning zeal and Christian love, the root and perfection of all graces, are harmonized only in those spirits which are nearest to their Saviour, and even among them in a most imperfect degree. Differences, hostilities, animosities, harsh judgments, ever have prevailed, and ever will prevail, just to the extent in which the passions of the natural man counteract the development of the inner man. They are evils, terrible evils, but their existence should not make us blind to the grandeur and majesty of the principles which they overshadow, principles which are to a great extent recognized, even by those who, from prejudice or the force of outward circumstances, fail to discern their work in others. Dense though the clouds may be, fierce as may be the tempests which agitate the lower strata in the atmosphere of human thought, they bear no proportion to the region of eternal peace and light in which every loving spirit has its true home, in which,

when this period of struggle and probation has passed away, all will recognize in each other true brethren, true followers, and children of a common Lord.

Consider indeed, on the one hand, the vast extent and the paramount importance of the truths which are held in common by the immense majority of Christians in every quarter of the world; on the other hand, the fact that in each community some special characteristics are found bearing witness to the presence of the great Teacher of spirits, the great Shepherd of souls. Take the fundamentals of the Christian faith. They are presented in a singularly complete form in the Nicene Creed, that Creed in which the whole Church embodied her deepest convictions; and observe that no one point therein declared is contested or questioned in any of the great communions of the East or the West. The Greek Church retains this Creed without mutilation or addition; the churches of the West accept every statement in it without any reservation. Nor, much as we may regret, severely as we may blame one church, for that unwarranted and unscriptural addition, by which the papal supremacy has been placed on a level with scriptural truths, can we fairly assert that it involves any denial or abandonment of aught that appertains to the integrity of the Christian faith? Within our own communion it need scarcely be said there is to this extent a perfect unanimity; no party would hesitate to accept this Creed as a test of soundness: nor when we look at the most important and influential communities of Dissenters do we find any intentional departure from this standard. Judging our brethren, who have unhappily withdrawn from the

fold of the National Church, by their most authoritative formularies and principal teachers, we gladly recognize them as accepting in common with ourselves every doctrine in that Creed which touches the manifestation of God to man. Nor would I withhold this recognition from the Protestant communities of the Continent, so far as they retain the faith of their ancestors, who at the time of the Reformation unanimously placed the Nicene Creed in the foreground of their public profession of the Christian faith. Can we doubt that Christ the one Shepherd makes His voice heard, finds many a sincere and loving follower wherever His teaching is so far accepted? or that, defective or erroneous as may be the prevalent tone in some portions of Christendom, in each portion light and life are retained, such as under the guidance and power of the Spirit will bring all humble and faithful hearts to their true home, as members of one flock, under the one Shepherd and Bishop of their souls?

If indeed we pursue this train of thought, with charity as our unfailing guide, we shall be led much further. We shall not merely recognize the existence of common principles in separate folds, but we shall see in each fold some special proofs of a spiritual power, working effectually, and calling upon us for warmer feelings than mere tolerance. Can we think of the Greek Church in any one of its portions without admiration for its constancy, its unshaken allegiance to its Lord, its retention of every article of faith recognized by the Universal Church before the great schism, its rejection of unscriptural additions and usurpations?

The depth and warmth of devotional feelings in its liturgical forms, in its hymns, now taking their proper place in our estimation, will scarcely be questioned and there are symptoms* which justify a confident hope that a thorough awakening of that Church is nigh at hand. The quick intellect of Greece is bursting its bonds, shaking off the lethargy which, under tremendous pressure, for ages overwhelmed it; it has sought light, recovered its energies, mastered rapidly the results of European investigation, and has already produced writings which take their place at once among the standard works of theology, and which are even more valuable as indications of a movement which, I doubt not, within a few years will cast off spontaneously the practices and corruptions introduced during a long period of humiliation and ignorance, and will develope the principles which keep the spirit of man in unison with the teaching of the Spirit of God. Christ has in that fold no small portion of the one great flock which know Him as their Shepherd, which He knows as indeed His own.

Were it possible in the narrow limits of a morning's discourse, I would attempt to show that in the other communities of the East, under all the accretions of ignorance and superstition, scarcely avoidable under circumstances of external degradation, there are unmistakable indications of a real Christian life. Devoutness in prayer, earnest maintenance of central truths, purity in domestic relations—these are characteristics of our Eastern brethren, which forcibly arrest the attention of those who come among them with hearts open to

* See the Sermon on Clement of Rome.

Christian sympathy; nor do I doubt that many members of those churches, now little known or harshly judged by European Christians, will shine forth with a pure and gracious lustre among those whom Christ at His second coming will bring with Him as His own.

Come nearer home. Will any here present deny that the Roman communion—that portion which has suffered most severely from evil influences, in which the darkest clouds have overcast the spiritual firmament—has in past times, has in the present time, representatives in whom the saintly and heroic features of Christianity have been manifested? We indeed feel that our forefathers were more than excusable, they were justified, in their alienation from that body; they could scarcely be expected to recognize the graces of individual members. We indeed retain, never I trust to recede from, their position of antagonism to an usurped and unchristian authority, to customs and doctrines deadly in their influence or tendencies; but we are so far in a more favourable position, that we can, without danger to our own souls, or to those of our brethren, fully recognize in individual members of that alien community characteristics of Christ's true children —simple devotion, self-sacrifice, entire submission to what they accept as the revealed will of God. Nor can we but remember that in every field of theological research Romanists have held a singularly high rank. To the labours of the Benedictines we owe the profoundest and fairest investigations into the teaching of the great fathers of Christendom. Among Church historians Fleury and Tillemont, who have worthy

successors in our own days, such as De Broglie, Ampère, A. Thierry, are conspicuous for candour, sobriety, and industry. And to pass from the study to the work of Christ among His people, the Christian preacher, the Christian missionary, acknowledges Romanists such as Bourdaloue, Massillon, Bossuet, Lacordaire, as examples whom he may be content to imitate, and can scarcely hope to surpass. In that fold vast numbers undoubtedly belong to the one flock which owns Christ as its Master, which Christ recognizes as His own.

Nor can I but point out that in the most opposite directions the same observations are applicable. Repugnant as the harsh doctrines of Calvinism are to most spirits, generally as they are now rejected by the Christian conscience, yet who can deny that within the fold most completely under their influence, most completely isolated by them from the great body of fellow-Christians, graces of singular preciousness and nobleness have been developed—intense piety, purity of heart and life, utter unworldliness, absolute resignation to God's will, unbounded trust in the Saviour's love? Who does not feel assured that souls thus developed will be among the brightest in the kingdom of heaven? All that is narrow, harsh, and alien from Christ's boundless love, will fall away, like scales from the eyes of Saul, when such a soul sees Christ as He is, and by that sight is brought into full conformity with Him. Then that soul will see in others, who hold the same central principles, true brethren, and they in turn will see in it one among unnumbered proofs that in every fold where Christ's name is known and Christ's person

is loved, He has members of the one flock which own Him as their Shepherd, which He recognizes as His own.

Let us see to it that we do not throw away, or endanger by personal shortcoming, the very special privileges which are ours within the fold of our own national Church. Whether we regard the completeness, the purity of its doctrinal teaching, founded exclusively on Holy Writ, attested by the concurrent voice of Christian antiquity, or its outward organization, approaching most nearly to the apostolic standard, or its abundant supply of means of grace, we cannot but be struck by the peculiar weight of responsibility which attaches to us as individual members. The one question for us is, whether, as we are within the fold, we belong to the living flock?—a fact of which we can only be assured so far and so long as we receive and reproduce those graces which are unquestionably the gifts of Christ, and the only attestation to His presence. Woe to us if we fall short of others far less highly favoured in single-hearted piety, in purity of life, in devotedness to Christ's service, in spirituality; above all, in charity—in that Christian love, which is the one permanent, absolute bond of union between believers each to other, between themselves and Christ; a charity which must extend unreservedly to every member of our own community, in act, deed, and word; a charity which will guard and determine our judgments of all our brethren, which will prove, as nothing else can prove, that we belong to that flock which owns Christ as its Shepherd, which Christ will recognize as His own.

## SERMON XI.

### Christ Draweth all Men.

"And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me."
John xii. 32.

There are two main witnesses to the fulfilment of this great saying, in which our Lord announced the effects of His death and entrance into glory. The first witness is the consciousness of every individual who has been drawn unto Christ by the power of His cross and His resurrection. The other witness is the change which that power has wrought in the whole current of human action and of human thought. To strengthen that consciousness, to help each individual to realize its bearings, to develope its applications to all points of spiritual life and practical duty, is the chief object of the ministrations of the Church. He to whom Christ crucified is a living truth is raised into a region inaccessible to the storms which disturb the atmosphere of intellectual life. He knows that his Redeemer liveth; he knows that in Christ he has access to God. And well would it be for all of us could our meditations and efforts be directed to this object alone; could we assume that the one thing really needed by all is

but the confirmation of convictions already held—the expansion and development of principles already maintained. In that case it would suffice to call in the first witness, to search into the secret movements of our own consciousness, in order to learn the nature and the force of that attraction whereby the risen Saviour draws men unto Himself. But there are obvious reasons why we should summon that other witness, and inquire what testimony it bears to the same truth. There are reasons why we should ponder upon the manifestations of Christ's power, not only among those who recognize Him as their King, but among those who repudiate His claims, and count themselves among His opponents. Does Christ draw them also? Do their words or acts certify His influence? In the very heat and vehemence of their struggles, in their reluctant or unconscious admissions, in their mode of dealing with evidences which they profess to have rejected after due investigation, is there still a something which proves that Christ makes His power felt upon their minds? that He does not leave Himself without a witness in their hearts? that He draws them still? that even while they resist, and—by virtue of that strange power inherent in man as a responsible and free agent—effectually resist, they still feel the strain of that force by which He would draw them into communion with Himself? These are questions we may well ask. The answer may enable us to realize more vividly the truth which may sustain us in this our day, which may be said to be a "day of trouble and of rebuke" (Isa. xxxvii. 3), a time pronounced by friends

and foes alike to be one in which the deepest and dearest interests of humanity are at stake.

A fact well known to all students of history will considerably facilitate this inquiry. In order to ascertain the effects of Christ's power upon the general current of unbelieving thought, we have but to consider its effects upon those individuals who best represent its tendencies. Each century produces its own representatives—men who give expression to the feelings and principles by which it has been most deeply affected, whether for good or for evil. As within the Church we can always turn to certain great names by which we are brought at once into contact with its innermost springs of action, and are enabled to comprehend each stage of its development, so without the Church we find no difficulty in singling out its principal opponents. And, if I mistake not, we can trace in the foremost of those men certain characteristics which cannot be accounted for, except on the supposition that they felt a power against which they struggled; that they were drawn by an irresistible fascination towards an object which they professed to regard as unworthy of serious contemplation; that they were possessed, haunted, so to speak, by the consciousness of a living Presence, which they would not recognize, but from which they could not escape. Such feelings found true utterance in the words recorded by all contemporary historians save one, who as a heathen recoiled from their bearing, the last words of the last heathen emperor, unhappy Julian, to whose reluctant eyes the cross revealed itself as a sign

of discomfiture not less distinctly than it had done to his predecessor as a pledge of victory. Would you have the witness of heathenism in its last agony? take it in his words, "Galilean, thou hast conquered!" And was not the mocking Frenchman a witness to the same influence when he screamed out, "Crush the infamous one"? Were not one and all of the band of infidels who in the last century strove with desperate effort to tear out of men's hearts the last traces of faith and hope in the Redeemer actuated by the same feeling? Did not they too bear witness to the same power? Else whence their heat, their violence, the pertinacity and bitterness of their assaults? Whence, above all, the frequent symptoms of inward perturbation, self-torturing distrust, and, in some most remarkable instances, of secret horror, if not from latent consciousness that they were contending with a living foe? No, brethren, Christ once known cannot be shut out from the heart. His arrows are sharp, even in the heart of the King's enemies. He compels them to certify to His power. He draws them, attaches them to His chariot wheels, as witnesses to the triumph which they would not consent to share.

Such is the impression which long study of the effects of Christianity upon its opponents in past ages has made upon my own mind; but knowing how open to objection a general statement must needs be, I should scarcely have ventured to make it had I not hoped that it may be verified and illustrated by a brief inquiry into late manifestations of unbelief. Those manifestations are on the whole most striking and complete in

the works of Ernest Renan on the evangelical history. The most important of all is that which professes to be a life of Jesus, the fifteenth edition of which has lately been published, containing the last and fullest exposition of rationalistic doctrine in its intensest form of development. That book in my opinion proves, as no book not proceeding from a mind wholly possessed by the spirit of Christ ever did prove, the life, the power, the Divine origin of the revelation which, as such, the writer utterly rejects. In the observations which I am about to make upon that book it is not my intention to deal with controversial details. I leave untouched the easy work of exposing its contradictions and inconsistencies, its misrepresentations of critical results, and the singular confidence which the writer must have felt in the credulity and ignorance of the great mass of his readers. What I propose to draw from the book is the witness which it bears to the truth that Christ has drawn, does now draw, and ever will draw, the hearts, the minds, the moral, spiritual, and intellectual nature of man unto Himself; and to show the value of that testimony I will endeavour, with no unkindly hand, to portray the character of the writer, as one in whom are exemplified some of the most striking characteristics of modern thought, so far as it has striven to develope itself in independence of the Christian faith.

The youth of Renan was nurtured under religious influences. Alluding to this fact he says, "No one can write effectively of Christianity who has not believed; no one," he adds, "can write candidly who has not ceased to believe." That faith, such as it was, was mingled with

impure elements. It was learned in the school of the Jesuits, in which religion has often found its most subtle antagonists; it has long since died out, and died out utterly; so died out that, to use his own words, he recognizes in the universe no intelligence superior to that of man,* no personality in the principle which underlies the phenomena of an ever-changing, ever-advancing world. He adopts as a natural consequence of this negation of belief the conviction that under no circumstances is an intervention of supernatural power possible or conceivable; with him the simple fact that an event claims to be miraculous, or an utterance claims to be a prediction, is sufficient to disprove its truth. Monotheism he holds to have been one element in the progress of humanity, but on the whole less conducive than Polytheism to its full development, thus justifying what seems to most thinkers the strange delusion of Julian, the fanatic supporter of manifold idolatries. With regard to man he has words of strange and painful significance. He speaks of his origin as doubtful, developed gradually, and, in all probability by a very imperfect process, from a state not differing essentially from that of the lowest animals. Here, of course, he agrees with what is called evolutionism; but with that system in its pessimist tendency. Taken as a whole he sees in humanity an assemblage of creatures base and selfish, superior, or to speak more correctly, morally inferior to the brute, inasmuch as our egoism is a product of reflection; a race false and treacherous, which must be deceived in order to be led, must be fed with delu-

* See *Revue des Deux Mondes*, tome xxv. p. 374.

sions in order to be raised; of all delusions the last and wildest being the hope of a personal immortality. Unbelief has reached its last stage. It does not believe even in itself; for in the midst of this utter desolation there are signs, not indeed of a true life, but of an irrepressible agony at its loss. There are yearnings and aspirations which prove how far his state is removed from that of the nirvana of Buddhism, that of absolute repose. At one time he speaks of death, regarded as the cessation of individual consciousness, as a revolting absurdity;* at another he suggests the question whether, after all, the uneducated peasants of Galilee had not in the midst of their darkness a deep and true presentiment; if but a dream, yet a dream so beautiful that it has been ever since the source of life, the only consolation of mankind. Hopeless as he must be that human thought can ever unravel the problem of existence, can know the why and the wherefore, the origin or the end of our being, he can still speak, in words scarcely intelligible, of a possible period in which, after the lapse of myriads of ages, this vast voiceless universe may arrive at a consciousness of itself.

And let me say it out frankly and freely, if in these and similar utterances the Frenchman gives full expression to tendencies which, as you are well aware, determine the current of thought among our own so-called positivists or secularists, he represents also some of the fairer and more genial aspects of cultivated

* See *Revue des Deux Mondes*, tome xxix. p. 796, and again p. 797. "L'homme est le plus dans le vrai quand il est le plus religieux et le plus assuré d'une destinée infinie."

humanity. Learned without pedantry, quick and apprehensive without superficiality, he has a singular power of realizing and reproducing the phenomena of past ages; he has followed humanity in its subtlest and darkest windings; he is equally conversant with the researches of physical science, and with the speculations of philosophy in its Eastern birthplace and in its Western home. The study of languages has been to him the study of human thought and human feeling; in all fields of inquiry he has sought out the facts which bear upon the advancement of our race. Nor can it be questioned that in the use of language, in perspicuity and lucid order, in the combination of words that burn and leave an indelible impress upon the mind, he must be ranked among the very foremost writers of this age. We cannot but, recalling Milton's words, think of a man in whom intellect without God has dared its wild adventurous flights as little less than 'archangel ruined'; for who can say that 'ruined' is too strong a term for a noble spirit which claims to be inheritor of nothingness, inhabitant of a blank abyss? Not without grief, nor, if I can trust my own feelings, without somewhat akin to sympathy, can we listen to the yearnings of a heart lost in the gulf over which we may have hung ourselves in mortal dread—into which we see bright, fearless spirits hurled daily, daring the dread doom of "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."*

But, brethren, the question is, What impression does Christ, the person of Christ, the religion of Christ, the

* Jude 13.

cross of Christ, make upon a soul like that? Shut out by the very form of his intellectual life from recognizing in Christ the true Son of the living God, what does he still recognize in Him? This you will first observe; he cannot withdraw his mind from that object. When he lost the convictions of his youth he could not turn his thoughts in another direction. He could not satisfy its cravings by devoting all his powers to the investigation of natural phenomena, a course which he pursued just far enough to come to the conclusion in which so many modern thinkers agree with the old exponent of Athenian scepticism,* to take the κρεῖσσον οὐδὲν ἀνάγκας as the result, necessity as the supreme law and ultimate principle of the universe. In all his wandering through the realms of speculation—πλεῖστον ἀψάμενος λόγων—he is ever harping back to the old question, What is life? What is God? What is the meaning, the destiny of the world? Every page of the Book, dear and precious to his youth, has still for him an irresistible attraction. Everywhere he sees, even while he attempts to explain them away, traces of the coming, or of the manifested Christ. He sets himself to solve that one great problem, How is it that religion in any form, how is it that religion in this special form, takes such hold upon man—upon me, the thinker; me, the unbeliever; me, who know that in this universe there is no Being consciously guiding its movements? And before I touch the conclusion at which he arrives, let me ask you to note this point. The very fact that, after years passed in the dreary region of negation, he feels himself constrained to

* Euripides, *Alcestis*, l. 962 f.

address his whole energies to this question proves, as it proves in the case of other assailants, the consciousness that it is a true, a living force with which he has to deal.

And what would you expect as the result, given on the one hand the broad facts of Christianity, given on the other some candour, some regard for truth once perceived on the part of the assailant? You would of course expect this. The aspects of Christian truth which have been deliberately rejected would needs excite feelings of repulsion; a repulsion the stronger, the more distinctly the truth is presented. The characteristic doctrines of Christianity, all the miraculous elements, much too of the deep and stern morality of Christ's teaching, would be systematically attacked. We should take for granted that attempts would be made to deny the authenticity of portions at least of the writings in which such doctrines and such teachings are recorded. But you might expect to find, and you *will* find, that though rejected, those doctrines, and the miracles with which they were associated, are candidly admitted to belong to the form in which Christianity was presented to the minds of the first converts, and in which it conquered the world. Note, too, his judgment of the Gospels themselves. Observe the very remarkable testimony which in his last published work, *Les Évangiles*, he bears to each of the Synoptists, in whom he finds a singularly true and lively appreciation of the central personality of Christ. He says of St. Matthew's gospel that it is the most important of all the books which have influenced the course of human thought, and this because it presents the teaching of Christ most fully—"Le livre

le plus important qui ait jamais été écrit;"* of St. Mark's, that it gives the most vivid portraiture of our Lord's life and actions;† of St. Luke‡ that it is the most beautiful book that was ever written—"Le plus beau livre qu'il y ait"—and that because the writer is penetrated through and through with the tenderness and sympathy of Jesus. From the gospel of St. John he has a natural aversion, yet even for that he recognizes the propriety of the designation—the gospel of love. All this is mingled with suggestions of falsehood and ignorance, with misrepresentations or misconceptions, which give the strongest impression of incongruity and mental disturbance in the critic; with statements so utterly without external evidence or internal probability that, by one so thoughtful and clear-sighted, they could only have been hazarded in a country where, with the exception of a devout and earnest but uninfluential minority, men live in profound ignorance of the historical facts connected with the origin and progress of our faith. The bitterness which, notwithstanding his professions of candour, and his striking admissions, still pervades all his works, is surely but a necessary

* pp. 212, 213.

† p. 116. Renan's historical tact very often enables him to dispose in a most satisfactory manner of unhistorical speculations hazarded by German critics. Thus in the Introduction to the fifteenth edition of the *Vie de Jésus*, p. lxxxiii., he says of St. Mark, "Il est plein d'observations minutieuses venant sans nul doute d'un témoin oculaire. Rien ne s'oppose à ce que ce témoin oculaire, qui évidemment avait suivi Jésus, qui l'avait aimé et regardé de très-près, qui en avait conservé une vive image, ne soit l'apôtre Pierre lui-même, comme le veut Papias."

‡ p. 282.

result of the desperate effort to crush altogether the old convictions which, so long as they leave any trace, make peace impossible for the struggling heart.

This however is not all; it is not the main feature of this series of works, it is not the secret of their strange fascination. Were it indeed all, the books might safely be dismissed with the indignant contempt which we feel for those who delight in the idle display of a perverse ingenuity, for men who would seem altogether incapable of large and lofty views, and altogether regardless of the pains inflicted upon loving hearts by their cynical irreverence. No, brethren, we rather learn this—that even when a man has lost the very principle of faith, yet so long as his heart beats, so long as he cares for any spiritual truth, so long as there is in him any sympathy with goodness, any lingering longing for a higher and purer state, he cannot fix his mind attentively on Christ without being drawn by His goodness, and overpowered at times by His majesty. He is drawn, not indeed as a convert, not as a worshipper; his expressions of admiration are wrung from reluctant lips, alternating with bitter carpings, tainted by the poison of deadly arrogance; but still the utterances come—utterances of genuine and irrepressible admiration. The very man who could distort the leading facts of the evangelical narrative, could insinuate charges of dishonesty against the singlehearted witnesses of Christ's works, who recoils with instinctive antipathy from the Divine glory, who believes that as his own body and soul are doomed to perish, so the personality of Christ has perished, that selfsame man can say of the Lord Jesus

that He still presides over the destiny of the world; that He brought our race into nearest contact with the Divine; that in Him is concentrated all that is good, all that is noble in humanity; that in Him alone was a perfect consciousness of absolute oneness with the Father of Spirits; that religion in Him attained to its absolute ideal, for that He created the heaven of pure souls, where we find that which we demand in vain of earth, the perfect nobility of God's children, absolute purity, total separation from the pollutions of the world; the liberty which, as he asserts, our social life rejects as an impossibility, which exists only in the realm of thought. Jesus, he asserts, is the great Master of those spirits which seek refuge in the ideal kingdom of God, so that in fact no religion is henceforth possible save that which depends upon, and is derived from, Christ.*

Think you not, brethren, that Christ draws all men unto Himself, when He thus draws those who in this our day reject the only principles which are compatible with a rational belief? Far above, far below the restless movements of all mere human thought is that power which Christ puts forth when He wins a conscious, or extorts an unconscious and reluctant, admission of His claims.

And what do we learn for ourselves? What is the true, the only, course open to a man of sense, to a man who cares for truth? Is he to remain in suspense? Is he to wait for the results of inquiries extending into every

* For these and similar passages see the concluding chapters of the *Vie de Jésus.*

domain of intellectual, historical, scientific research, involving long years of painful labour, utterly beyond the reach of any upon whom the practical duties of life have imperative claims? Shall we not attempt at once to fix our minds stedfastly upon Christ Himself? His religion has nothing in it apart from His Person, from His work. Look at Him, and try whether He will draw you. Let it be our own work, as Christians in any stage of the religious life, to try to understand Christ, to know what He says, to comprehend His personality as manifested in His life and in His death. Let us not be put to shame by those without; let it not be said that stronger attestations to the power and goodness of Christ come from those who reject the principles on which all religion rests. Somewhat we may learn from them; some lineaments in our dear Lord's countenance have been discerned very clearly by those who gazed only on His human person. Let us watch then, as with a more loving and reverential, so with a more careful observation; above all bearing in mind that when we look, it is that we may know; when we hear, it is that we may obey; when we follow the traces of His footsteps, it is that we may be conformed unto Him, be drawn out of ourselves unto Him, and in Him unto the Father, by His love manifested in all its fulness on the Cross.

## SERMON XII.

### Spiritual Resurrection.

**"If we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection."**
Rom. vi. 5.

The facts and doctrines connected with the resurrection of our Lord are brought before us under every variety of aspect in the services of the Church at this season. But the point of view under which the wise and pious men, to whom we are indebted, partly for the compilation, partly for the reformation, of these services, were especially anxious that we should contemplate that event, is its application to our moral and spiritual condition. Thus in the first sentences which on Easter Sunday are substituted for the customary psalm of praise and thanksgiving we are reminded of the sincerity and truth required of those who keep the feast of the Christian passover; while the thought that deadness to sin and new life unto righteousness are at once secured and represented by our Redeemer's death and resurrection finds expression in the remaining sentences, in the portion appointed for the epistle, and in the greater part of this chapter, which was formerly appointed, as it was certainly most appropriate, for the

second lesson. We will endeavour to follow in the track thus distinctly indicated, and to inquire into the meaning of the apostle's declaration, that "if we have been planted together in the likeness of our Lord's death, we shall be raised also in the likeness of His resurrection."

In the first place we must remark that this statement rests upon a spiritual truth which underlies all the doctrines of the Christian revelation, and which alone explains and harmonizes their apparent discrepancies. It is a truth difficult to be realized, not because it cannot be stated without ambiguity, but because it involves some experimental knowledge of spiritual realities. I mean the truth that the union between Christ and His people is so entire and perfect, that what He has done and suffered is not only imputed to them for their justification—a doctrine which may be grievously abused, but which belongs to fundamental truths—but also that it is in some sense, to some extent, reproduced in them for their sanctification, and that both inwardly in the form of spiritual renovation, and outwardly also in acts of devout service towards God, and of charity and righteousness towards their fellow-men. Christ is the head of the body of which they are living members. He is the principle of life; He is the vine of which they are the branches; in Him, as God, they live, and move, and have their being; in Him, as man, they see not only their exemplar, their model, but the central source and support of their renewed nature. The body which they derived from the first Adam becomes capable of a blessed immor-

tality by sacramental contact with the second Adam, who is a quickening spirit. Now this union implies a real participation in the work whereby our Lord purchased salvation for us, a participation which St. Paul here calls a planting together with Him in death, as a condition of our also sharing in a joyful resurrection.

The one question therefore which concerns us vitally must be, whether this condition has been in any real sense already fulfilled by us. If you look at the context, you will see clearly that St. Paul assumes that in the case of the converts whom he was addressing that change had actually been accomplished. Nay, more; beyond all doubt he asserts that a participation in the death of Christ, and therefore in all benefits secured by that death, including of course resurrection to life, was either effected or represented in their baptism. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Christ were baptized into His death?" That might possibly be explained to mean simply the vow and obligations which converts took on themselves before they were admitted to baptism; but he adds, "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death," a statement which cannot mean less than that a real change, a spiritual change, a change both of condition and character, had been effected, at once the beginning and the pledge of a new life, "that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we [all His people] should walk in newness of life."* Now it may of course be said, that this being the statement of the Apostle, a statement made

* Rom. vi. 4.

with exceeding care, it must apply virtually to all baptized Christians, all of whom died, by imputation at least, to sin, and rose from the font pledged at least to newness of life; and doubtless practical exhortations may be effectually urged by those who rest on that interpretation of the passage. But I am greatly mistaken if St. Paul intended to lead us into speculations how, or when, or under what circumstances, they whom he addressed, or others in future ages, might receive the germ of the new life. He would surely have us all look at the question in the light of reason and of conscience with reference to our actual condition and principles, inquiring, not whether regeneration was communicated to us at a given time, but whether we have now the proofs of a regenerating work proceeding in our hearts, and attested by our lives. Death unto sin in one sense is undoubtedly assured by baptism in which, to use the words of our Article, "the promises of forgiveness of sins, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed." But in the season of matured consciousness, in the case of every one who can discern between right and wrong, what we ought to know, what we must know under pain of perishing in darkness, is whether we are actually putting off the old man, mortifying our members upon the earth; whether, in a word, we are simply, honestly, bravely, striving to get the better of those passions and tendencies which we know to be opposed to all goodness, and which, if unchecked, must separate us from God. He who does this is planted with Christ in the likeness of His death. He realizes the spiritual act represented

in baptism. He has the witness in himself that the Spirit of Christ dwells in his mortal body. Increasing deadness to sin is the pledge, the only sure pledge, that he is dying with Christ, and that by the grave and gate of death he will pass to a joyful resurrection.

Deadness to sin. That is a strong word. Is it a true word? Does it represent a reality? Deadness to all sin does indeed transcend all realization upon earth. No saint ever claimed it; the mere claim would indeed involve a deadly heresy. Absolute deadness to sin is the exclusive glory of the humanity of our Redeemer. Yet in some sense, in some very practical sense, every sincere Christian must have something which shows him the meaning of the word. He must be dead to some sin which once lived in him, which had the mastery over him, or which from time to time assailed him. He is free from some inward stirrings, some fierce longings, some wild struggles, some unholy imaginings, which once haunted him. In fact the merely natural development of reason, mere change of circumstances, still more the growing sense of duty, the claims of professional life and of natural affection, produce in every man of ordinary sense in advancing years a certain degree and kind of deadness to sin. Who doubts that an honest tradesman becomes actually dead to the temptation to fraud? the sober man to inebriety? the man of lofty mind and generous impulses to base, selfish, dishonourable feelings? They do not touch him; they tempt him not; he is dead to them, even though he may still be living without any consciousness of the eternal and the divine. Why then should it be

regarded as a thing strange and incredible that a Christian should die gradually with Christ—die in Christ to each and every sin which, once made known to him in its true character, he hates and loathes, even while he feels the force of old passions, and is weakened by old habits? Shall we not be planted with Christ in the likeness of His death, knowing that such death, in its effects and its spiritual meaning, is the pledge that Christians will be raised with Him in the likeness of His resurrection?

Now let me ask you to consider another point. What is the chief difficulty which stands in your way when you attempt to realize the fact of a future resurrection of the body? I do not speak of merely speculative difficulties; most of them rest upon misapprehensions of what is really meant by the word resurrection. I would not willingly occupy your attention by considering objections which would involve an inquiry into what really constitutes the identity of the body, not only before and after its dissolution, but through the manifold and incessant changes which it undergoes during our life, easy as it would be to show that the substantial identity, which is scarcely open to serious question, cannot possibly consist in the mere particles which at any given time form our material integuments. It may, however, be worth while to observe that this view is not, as some have asserted, a mere attempt on the part of modern thinkers to escape from the difficulties raised by scientific researches. On the contrary, it was maintained and defended in clear and conclusive arguments by the most thoughtful of the

early Fathers of the Church. Origen, for instance, whose reasoning is adopted by Gregory of Nyssa, and in principle by St. Athanasius, and the other great teachers of the fourth century, says, "that the same body after death necessarily becomes a part of many men, that its physical elements before death undergo incessant changes; but that it has a permanence independent of those changes, inasmuch as the εἶδος," the forma of the schoolmen and of Dante, "that is, the principle or vital energy in which the individuality of the body consists, the inner man, is from first to last the same, not perishing in death, but raised to a higher, nobler state in the resurrection." To this point it may suffice to refer; a full inquiry would seem hardly suitable in this place, where we meet to worship a God in Whose almightiness and love we confide, and Whose promises are unmistakably distinct. But setting aside for the present inquiries of this character, let me ask you to put to yourselves this question: When we think of the departed, when we think of ourselves, what is the real moral difficulty which perplexes and disturbs us in connection with that most characteristic and all-important doctrine of the Christian revelation—the doctrine which asserts, on the authority of our Saviour, that life, true life, will again quicken this mortal frame, again fill the limbs with lost powers, throb in the beating heart, and flash from the loving eye?

Is it not the feeling, the certainty in many cases, that the acts in which the body, with all its marvellous energies, during this life has been occupied, have been for the most part of an earthly, sensual, if not abso-

lutely sinful character? "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," that seems a natural end, the only fitting end, to a mere sensual life. If the mere satisfaction of the cravings of our animal nature be the real end of existence, as it undoubtedly seems to many, and as, strange to say in a day above all things claiming to be enlightened, it is openly declared to be by some representatives of modern thought—inheritors in fact of ancient materialism—then indeed reason and conscience echo the sentence, God will destroy both it and them—a sentence, be it noted, accepted, nay, welcomed, by many so-called Positivists. The fact is, we cannot realize the thought of the resurrection, or, in any real sense, the thought of a conscious hereafter, while we are living altogether after the flesh. The man of the world, the man of pleasure, may listen to the plainest statements of Holy Scripture, to the reasonings which have convinced the clearest and strongest intellects in Christendom, but they will be to him but idle tales; for he feels that the true home of his body is the grave; and as for the spirit, what care can he have for it, when he has spent his life in successful efforts to deprive it of its lawful mastery, to bring it into slavery to the flesh? No, brethren, if we would believe in the resurrection, we must think of the great saints of old—think of those who lived above the flesh; think of those who made the body a sacred and glorious thing, a faithful and obedient minister to the behests of a Christ-like spirit: we must think of a St. John, of a St. Paul, toiling, striving, rejoicing, in stripes and imprisonment,

bearing the marks of the Lord Jesus, counting all things but loss for His dear sake, courting bonds, wounds, tortures, and death. Bring him distinctly before your minds, and then, if there be in you one particle of Christian sympathy, you will find no difficulty in realizing *his* resurrection. You will not think that the grave was the true home for that large, loving heart; he lives and speaks to us from beyond the grave. It will indeed be far more difficult to believe that all that composed that marvellous individuality is now but dust—mere particles of matter scattered to the four quarters of the world, forming part of birds, and beasts, and vilest things that crawl upon the earth—than to acknowledge and welcome the assurance that his spirit is now with his Saviour, Who will raise body, soul, and spirit in the integrity of personal existence, at the day of His reappearing. But, brethren, it may well be that you have other examples in your minds; while I have been speaking words which to many perchance may have sounded unreal, some well-remembered form has risen before you. You must have felt that the cold, dark grave to which you consigned all that remained here of a parent, a sister, a child, or one dearer still, could not be the last, the only home. Far easier, far more natural, was the thought,—nay, no thought merely, no mere conclusion of man's reason, no mere creature of his imagination, but a living conviction founded on the unchangeable will and promise of God,—that when Jesus brings with Him all who lived with Him, and now sleep in Him, you will see them again—see them with your own eyes

and not another. Blessed is the man who, terribly as he may have felt the bereavement, has such associations connected with the memory of the departed! Blessed; for the hope thus cherished is the best and surest evidence that his own nature is undergoing the process by which he will be prepared for the same triumph over the last enemy, that in his renewed and glorified body he shall see God.

But, brethren, let us consider well all that is involved in the statement that we shall be raised again in the likeness of Christ's resurrection. It has a two-fold bearing, and the bearing which concerns us most specially now, upon the realization of which depends the whole result for us, is the resurrection of the soul, not in the future, but now in our present state. It means that now, here, so soon and so far as we yield ourselves to the fire of the Holy Ghost, our souls will be quickened, filled with a new life. Talk of the strangeness, the inconceivableness of a bodily resurrection, what is that to the resurrection of a dead soul? The first converts saw that miracle daily—that was the miracle which filled them with such earnest, unhesitating, unswerving faith. Realize all that is included in the word, a dead soul, a soul without light, without warmth, without hope, without God; a soul buried in a body, gross, sensual, swayed unresistingly by evil passions, vile, earthly, devilish; a soul such as Paul sets before us in traits so dark, so hideous, that were not the portraiture attested by facts within our own experience, not to speak of facts well known to the student of ancient literature, the mind would reject it

as incredible; and the first Christians saw daily instances of such souls raised, quickened, filled with the life of Christ, raised suddenly to a state which astonishes *us* by its conformity to the holiness of Christ,—but yesterday in darkness and corruption, and to-day light in the Lord. Changes in these days are less sudden, less palpable; they are indeed precluded by the very fact that all among whom our lot is cast are more or less consciously affected by Christian influences. Between the man who avows belief in Christ, and him who withholds his allegiance, the moral difference is not always discernible, and we lose somewhat of the evidence which affected the first Christians so powerfully; but of this you may be assured; no man who is himself brought consciously out of a state of spiritual death, out of sin, out of apathy, out of absolute disbelief in the eternal by the power of Christ, ever feels any real difficulty about other marvels; he has the witness in himself, the evidence of a power transcending all other powers, enabling him to rest peacefully on the promise of his God.

Doubtless, brethren, it is a common thing to indulge in vain speculations as to the meaning or mode of the last resurrection; much superstition may be mixed up with popular conceptions of that event; doubtless the rising again from the dead is a thing that differs widely from the mere resuscitation of a corpse. St. Paul teaches us plainly that the identity of the spiritualized with the natural body is compatible with a far greater change in its form and substance than, with our imperfect knowledge, we can anticipate or comprehend. But this is

certain, this is the truth which it concerns us to know, the doctrine which we must be safe in accepting—in whatever that change consists it will but develope fully all that is in us here; what we become now in heart, in mind, in character, that we shall be, not indeed in degree, but in kind hereafter. We shall rise in the likeness into which we have been moulded by our habits here; our features will bear the impress of the feelings which are here the mainspring of our existence; and if we are planted together in the likeness of Christ's death, then and then only shall we be raised in the likeness of His resurrection.

## SERMON XIII.

### The Past Required.

"God requireth that which is past."—Ecclesiastes iii. 15.

This is one of the flashes which at intervals cast a vivid light upon a dark and intricate portion of Holy Writ. The book in which Solomon reviews the experiences of his long and chequered career is undoubtedly full of difficulties. The events and projects and speculations which at various periods occupied his curious and energetic spirit are brought before us in rapid succession. Each and all stand out, depicted with singular distinctness; each and all pass away, dismissed with melancholy scorn as utterly futile and worthless, leaving on the mind a painful and overpowering impression of universal emptiness. It is not surprising that they who are content to remain in doubt concerning the whole mystery of existence, and who seek everywhere for corroboration of their opinions, should claim the writer as an example and advocate of absolute and hopeless scepticism. But such a passage as that which I have taken for my text, supported and explained by many others of similar import, is conclusive as to the real principle and object of the whole book. That object is to make

us feel that the vicissitudes of life are not merely ever-recurring movements of one ceaseless current, without a meaning, a beginning, or an end, but that they are subject to a spiritual law, controlled by an almighty will, watched by an all-seeing eye, and that they are intended to elicit and to test the inner principle of every individual of our race. "God requireth that which is past." No act, no word, no thought is consigned to oblivion. The man is brought to account for the use or abuse of every faculty, of every opportunity; for the enjoyments of youth, the occupations of manhood, the direction given to his intellectual powers, the purposes to which his attainments are made subservient, for the effects of his personal influence upon his fellow-men. For whatever he does, or speaks, or thinks, he will have to answer to God; he must live, remembering always the strict and solemn account which he must one day give before the judgment-seat of Christ.

The interest which attaches to this subject is universal; it cannot even be worn out by incessant repetition; far from decreasing, it becomes ever more engrossing when the fundamental truths on which it rests are assailed by speculation. It comes too near our hearts, it presses too strongly on the mainspring of our being, for any one to escape from it, much of course as its effects must needs vary according to our inward condition, the state of our affections and our conscience, or the character of the past occurrences which rise before our minds in moments of solitary musing, full of compunctious visitations, of impressive warnings, or of foreboding terror. At present we may consider its

bearings on some few points of importance to all alike, whether we are but partially affected by the realities brought to our consciousness by the revelation of God in Christ, or are earnestly endeavouring to bring our hearts and lives into accordance with the Divine will, and thus to prepare ourselves for that hour when "the dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God Who gave it."

One characteristic of the moral teaching of this very remarkable book calls for special attention. Notwithstanding the "sore travail" of the Preacher's spirit, the deep melancholy which the retrospect of a life, far transcending that of ordinary men in its opportunities and responsibilities, necessarily engendered in a conscience heavily laden with sins of omission and commission, there is a total absence of the gloomy asceticism which ever characterizes spurious manifestations of religious feeling. Far from condemning, the Preacher approves and encourages all innocent and natural enjoyments. From first to last the dark clouds of thought are chequered by visitings of gracious light. The conversion of heart must have been deep and genuine; it must have brought his spirit into contact with the Giver of all good, since it enabled the old man to sympathize with the youthful and energetic, both in their exertions and in their enjoyments. He bids them indeed ever remember how short and uncertain is their hold upon life, how utterly and how soon its best and dearest delights vanish. Still he would have them rejoice in all while they last. In the very passage from which the text is taken he saith,

"God hath made everything beautiful in His time." "It is the gift of God that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the fruits of all his labour." And when he is about to sum up the purport and bearings of the whole discourse, he addresses himself emphatically to the young man, whom he bids to rejoice in his youth, to let his heart cheer him in the days of his youth, to walk in the ways of his heart and in the sight of his eyes—in other words, to follow without punctilious and over-anxious scrupulosity those pure and simple instincts which God has implanted in our nature. This is indeed a most remarkable feature in this remarkable book, one which has long since appeared to me a most convincing evidence that it must have proceeded from the man in whom the early gift of wisdom, though for a long season overpowered by the combination of the strongest temptations which ever beset a child of Adam, recovered all its brightness in its latest hours of communion with God. But free as is his teaching from all taint of moroseness and austerity, equally clear is it from the opposite and far more dangerous extreme of indifferentism. His teaching is precisely that of our Lord, and of the apostle to whom it was given to set forth most distinctly and completely the principles of Christianity; who tells us "that God hath given us all things richly to enjoy," that every creature of God is good, and that none is to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving; but that for the use we make of all we shall have to give account. "Know thou," saith the Preacher, "that for all these things God will bring thee into

judgment;" "He will require of thee that which is past." The one question for us to consider is, whether we draw the line sharply and decidedly between the innocent and lawful, the healthful and profitable, exercise of our faculties, and selfish, unconscientious indulgence, whether physical, emotional, or intellectual. The remembrance of the former will bring with it no bitterness, no remorse, no terrible forebodings. The spirit of thankfulness for each pleasant gift while it lasted will predominate over all other feelings, provided only that we have accepted and used it as coming from Him Who, in every good and perfect gift bestows upon His people means whereby their best affections may be developed, and His own purposes may be carried into effect. Among the soft gleams which fall upon the path of the aged Christian, as he draws near to his last home, a peculiar sweetness will attach to the memories of departed joys, cherished thankfully while they lasted, and surrendered without rebellious struggles when they were withdrawn. Such reminiscences come as tokens of a Father's love, Who in His best earthly gifts does but bestow a pledge and imperfect foretaste of the blessedness which He reserves for those who love Him supremely, and love Him to the last.

But, true as this portion of the Preacher's doctrine may be, fit as it is that it should be remembered in times when the fair aspect of religion is so often obscured by grievous misrepresentations, there are other points which affect most of us far more deeply. Which indeed of us can realize without serious misgivings

the thought that God will require of us all that is past. Let us then see what common sense and common experience have to tell us on this point, and what additional lessons of warning or consolation our one great Teacher may then supply. They leave no place for doubt as to the fact presented to us in the text; Christ, and He alone, will enable us to contemplate it without dismay.

What reason and observation tell us is this: The past lives in its effects; acts long since done go on in the inevitable sequence of cause and effect now and for ever. Science does but confirm and extend this conclusion indefinitely, if I may not say infinitely. Who is there now who does not know that not a particle of matter perishes? The words of the Preacher in the beginning of this book do but anticipate the results of modern inquiry. "The thing which hath been it is that which shall be, and that which is done is that which shall be done;" and there is no new thing, nothing in the ordinary course of nature without its efficient cause, "under the sun." And as with matter, so with force. Who is there now who knows not that it never dies out, that it is indestructible, that it undergoes indeed ceaseless transformation, but in substance and amount remains ever the same? The past, then, is required by nature's laws; it abides in its consequences. What we are now is the result of the past. "The child," in our great poet's words, "is the father of the man;" undisciplined boyhood is followed by profligate youth; the bad man's brow is scarred by the vices of his younger days; the aching limbs, the dishonoured

name, the desolate and wretched house of the aged sinner, are but the natural result of a misspent life. The rule holds for good as for bad. There is not in our physical condition, in our outward circumstances, in our intellectual or moral development, aught that could not be accounted for, that could not have been foretold, had all the antecedents of our inner and outer life been accurately and completely known. Only the idle, the thoughtless, or the ignorant, in these days speak of chance, of fortuitous occurrences, of interruptions of the unbroken chain which, *subject to the control of one eternal Will*, connects the beginning and the end of all human action, feeling, and thought. The judgment which, as the Christian knows, awaits all hereafter, begins in this life. Here indeed it is not bounded by purely moral and religious principles, which alone will determine our blessedness or misery when the God of righteousness rectifies all the irregularities of temporary and preparatory dispensations. Here indeed mere ignorance, imprudence, errors of judgment, compliance with the will of those who may have a natural right or a recognized claim to be our guides, often entail most formidable and durable consequences. Loss of fortune, loss of health, widespreading calamities, affecting thousands, nay, millions, of our fellow-men, tell us that in its present constitution nature inexorably requires the past, teaching, though with a voice intelligible only to the well-disciplined ear, truths which, so far as they are apprehended, advance the cause of civilization, the physical and mental amelioration of the human race. And what is

the order of nature but the order of nature's God, the expression of His will? Not indeed of all His will, not of His eternal purposes towards beings in whom His spirit lives, destined to be conformed perfectly to His likeness hereafter; but the expression of His will to us in our present state, binding us all to see that no germs of future wretchedness and degradation be permitted to exist, if they can be prevented or exterminated by human forethought and care.

I have taken perhaps unnecessary pains to show what none deny, though it may be but few thoroughly realize, that the past is required by its effects; but our personal experience, the inner consciousness of most men—I believe of every man who attends seriously to what passes within him—goes a step further. It teaches us that the past actually does still live within us; the thoughts and emotions, the impressions of our early years, abide with us; they would seem to be, indeed I believe them to be, substantially indestructible. They are indeed, as we are all aware, for the most part dormant; each, so to speak, may lie silent and motionless in its own recess, occupying some chamber of our mental structure without giving for many years distinct intimations of its presence—half-perceptible in glimmerings of reverie or meditation. But ever and anon they start up into sudden life, they flash out like lightning from the murky clouds, and all at once scenes long since gone, of which all remembrance appeared to have departed, stand out, living, complete, with all their minutest accessories, even such as at the time were un-

noted; old voices are heard again; old faces, once loved or feared, look out upon us; feelings which we indulged, or which we repressed with painful struggles, are recalled with all the keenness and freshness of their first awakening. In the strange, inexplicable region of dreams we thus at times live over the past again, feel ourselves to be still the same, manifold and complete as may seem to be the changes which have passed over our impressionable and ductile nature.

Were this all it would suffice to prove that the past is in us; that it is here, ready to answer when required, ready to bear its witness to every shortcoming, to every mean, selfish, sensual thought which in times past we may have permitted to taint our spirits, haunting us evermore, and peopling the vaults of memory with no mere shadows, but terrible associations. Men may of course exercise some control over their minds when assailed by such reminiscences; they must indeed do so; for there can be no doubt but that to surrender our waking spirit to the emotions which spontaneously recur in these moments would be to prepare the way for utter phrenzy. But still the fact remains that the past is within us, is ever ready to make itself felt, not merely by its effects, but by its presence, proving at once the permanence and substantial unity of the spiritual portion of our nature, which alone gives a probable or an intelligible account of such retention, and the responsibility which attaches to every voluntary act and movement of our being. Nor is this all. We know from the sure evidence of many who have been called back from the half-opened gate of death, who in

moments of mortal anguish have felt themselves close to the sphere of disembodied spirits, that then every event of their past lives, from very infancy to the last moment of existence, has come before them, making an ineffaceable impression, which, however they might interpret it, whatever effect it might have upon their own lives, convincing them that every soul has its past history written in its innermost consciousness; that it will have but to unroll that record in order to present a full and exact account of all that it has undergone and done, when "God requireth of it that which is past."

But has this declaration no element of comfort? Is menace or even warning its only import? Nay, brethren, there is one word in the text which for the evil-hearted and impenitent is fraught with the deepest horror, which for them carries the prospect of terrible retribution beyond the limits of time into eternity; but it is a word which for the heart-stricken, for the humble and faithful, has unutterable consolation. For *Who is it that requireth the past?* Not Nature merely, inexorable because insentient—nature without sympathy, without the desire or power to obviate or mitigate the misery which neglect, or ignorance, or accidental transgressions of its laws may produce—but God, the living God, God the Author and Lord of nature, the God of mercy and of love, the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Take this to heart whenever you think of the past, whenever you contemplate the future results of your acts. Repentance, conversion, all spiritual convictions, regarded as ineffectual or as mere superstition

by others, are full of meaning, full of efficacy, full of hope, to him who trusts in the revelation which God has made of Himself in Christ. All that is soul-destroying in the past, all that but for God in Christ would be ineradicable, can be and will be annihilated, blotted out of God's book, and obliterated from your own consciousness hereafter, when, in the complete renovation of your nature the blood of the atonement has wrought its proper and perfect work. God will put away your sin.

Nor will any sincere penitent grieve too deeply at the thought that the temporal sufferings, the losses and changes of outer circumstances, which past misconduct or error may have occasioned, will not here be reversed; that where his past use or abuse of blessings and opportunities has left him, there, so far as regards this season of trial and preparation, he and his must for the most part be content to remain. For that thought will but incite him to more earnest use of what is still within his power, will but make him watchful and energetic in seizing every occasion of doing good, of serving his God, of inscribing on every remaining page of the record, which he will have to present, some note of a spirit becoming daily more Christ-like in goodness and in love.

Ere he depart hence one feeling will swallow up all other feelings—that in God the Judge he will see God the Saviour. True, he will listen with awe to the Preacher's conclusion of the whole matter, that "to fear God and to keep His commandments is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judg-

ment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." But he will listen to it without mortal terror; nay, with an assured and undeceiving hope, trusting in Him Who hath fulfilled all righteousness, and provided a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for every repented sin.

## SERMON XIV.

### The Intermediate State.

"I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."—Revelation xiv. 13.

It was a wise and tender thought of early Churchmen to associate the memory of departed saints with the departing year. A season fraught with melancholy feelings, suggesting painful reminiscences and forebodings, is thus irradiated by a serene light. If we are sustained by the consciousness that as the outward man perished, the inward man is renewed day by day, we shall watch calmly the slow but ceaseless process of decay, presenting to us a lively image of what we have witnessed in others and observe in ourselves as our years verge towards their speedy termination. We shall not look forward over anxiously to the breaking up of the organization in which we may have vainly endeavoured to realize our ideal of life and duty, if we have a full living conviction that dissolution itself is but a necessary condition of the reconstruction of the body, when it will be freed from all the ills which sin and weakness have brought upon it, and be changed by the power of Christ

into the likeness of His own glorious body, a fit tabernacle and able instrument of the renovated soul. It is indeed true that this support is apt to fail us when we fix our thoughts too exclusively upon ourselves. The clearer insight we gain under our Lord's teaching into the majesty and beauty of the spiritual life, into its inherent affinity to the eternal and Divine, the more painfully and forcibly we are struck by the contrast with our actual state—a feeling common to all Christians, most fully developed in those who commune most closely with their own hearts and with God. But what we do not find in ourselves we acquire, unconsciously it may be, but surely, when we fix our whole attention upon the truth as it is announced to us by Revelation, when we contemplate the representations of its fulfilment in the persons of those whom we recognize as saints, holy in intent, holy in life, holy in death. They surround us as a cloud of witnesses testifying to the life and power of the principles which we so inadequately realize: we see in them a proof of what may be achieved by those who confront life's perils, and accomplish life's duties, fixing their hearts upon Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith.

An examination of the passage which I have taken for my text may aid us in forming a clear conception of some truths which most of us feel considerable difficulty in apprehending, but which have an enthralling interest for all who know and feel themselves to be travellers between life and death, sojourners for a season only in a land which is not, and cannot be, their true and final home. Such is undoubtedly the

judgment of the Church touching this passage; such is the reason which moved her to select this "voice from heaven" for the consolation and instruction of those who commit their loved ones to the grave.

The passage consists of two clauses, distinct, but closely connected. What do we learn from the first? Much directly; much also by way of fair and certain inference. That all who die in the Lord are blessed is a statement which may not perhaps call for explanation, but assuredly demands close attention in order to discern its full import. To die in the Lord includes a great variety of meanings, all true and important and needful to be realized. To die in the faith and fear of the Lord, to die in a state of reconciliation and peace with the Lord, to die in perfect communion with the spiritual Body of which He is the Head, all these are but aspects of one great principle, the principle of inner union with Christ Himself. He who lives in Jesus, moved by the Spirit of Jesus, quickened by the life of Jesus, attains to the fulness of that life, if at all, at the very crisis when all other support fails him, when he is alone in death with Him. Doubtless the great apostle who recorded this saying had before him mighty examples of saints who in life attained marvellously near to the glorious ideal, who in death set forth visibly the power of their Master's Cross and Passion—virgin spirits purified by contact with the source of life, martyrs well content to shed their blood for their dear Saviour's sake; and doubtless that great apostle felt in his inmost being a consciousness of all that is betokened by the words—to die in Jesus. But weak and

unstable, and cold and dark, as we may know ourselves to be, there is surely not one of us who has not heard or seen enough to enable him to realize the power of Christ in the hour of death, who has not witnessed the outburst of triumphant life in some saintly spirit at the near approach of dissolution. The Voice that spoke to St. John makes itself heard in accents not less loud, with power not less effectual to sustain and raise, whenever a soul that loved its Saviour passes out of this dark valley which we call life, into that region which men call death, but which the Christian knows to be eternal life.

So far our only difficulty is to realize the doctrine of Holy Scripture; but the meaning of the word "henceforth" is questioned. Yet on looking well at the general scope and bearing of the context we may, I think, satisfy ourselves that "henceforth" points to a crisis or epoch in the Divine dispensation. It distinguishes in some way the state of those who, after this crisis, enter the intermediate abode of spirits between death and the resurrection, from the state of those who had previously become its habitants. The state of good men who died before the coming of Christ appears to me to be always spoken of in the Old Testament as one of true, but very imperfect, blessedness; a period, not indeed of unconsciousness, but of dim expectation. It was scarcely looked forward to with joy by those who trusted confidently in the power and love of God. At the best they would but be 'prisoners of hope' still, waiting for their appointed change—for the morning which, after an unknown length of night, would usher in the day of re-

storation. But when Christ came, when He had accomplished His work, when the blood was shed which atoned for all repented guilt, when His body had hallowed the grave, when His Spirit had burst the bars of the pit and preached to the spirits in hades, a mighty change was effected—light shone into the pit, the prison became a palace. The future restoration, though not as yet effected, was anticipated; and while all the great spirits of old, who in darkness and trembling had passed into the shadow of death, were filled with a new joy, henceforth all who departed hence in union with Jesus, entered at once into a state of conscious blessedness, knowing, like St. Paul, that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord—present with Him in no dim visionary region, but present in Paradise.

We pass to the second part of the announcement. Its importance is marked very strongly, being declared to be the direct utterance of the Spirit. It tells us in what the blessedness of the departed consists: "They rest from their labours, and their works follow them." Both statements, clear as they are, require examination. A cessation from labours is certainly not all that is meant by the first clause, taking labours in our ordinary acceptation of the word; but, as you know, the Greek word (κόποι) has invariably the sense of trying and distressing labours, exertions which, whether effectual or not, involve a painful strain, efforts often baffled, ever exhausting, ever reminding us of the condition into which man falls when he deliberately sets his own will against God's will; when therefore, instead of working in harmony with the eternal principles by which the universe

is administered, he works more or less in antagonism to them, or in ignorance of their bearings. Looking at this point more closely, we feel that all the labours connected with our existence in the world of time and sense involve weariness, are liable to failure; at the best they are mixed up with much that we would gladly be rid of; and a very large portion of them are altogether futile, directed to wrong ends, issuing in results utterly opposed to our own wishes and intents. Hence the very common feeling, which at times, I doubt not, creeps over us all, that it is well all such labour should come to an end; that the weary turmoil and struggle should cease; that rest, even at the cost of unconsciousness, is in itself a good; and could we but be secure that together with this mortal coil we shook off all responsibility for the past, and all possibility of recurrence of old struggles and trials, we might, perhaps, often be content to lay down our worn-out bodies for ever in the quiet grave. But the statement in the text goes much farther; it goes farther in two opposite directions. It tells us that they only, who depart hence in that condition which is described as being in the Lord, rest from their labours; for those who have no higher end than the gratification of their own passions, the fulfilment of their own will, the labours do *not* cease. Analyzing the word labour, the element of effectual work may indeed be withdrawn; but the element of struggle, of painful effort, of weariness, of distress, will remain. *There is no rest*, saith my God, to the wicked. But, on the other hand, this last element, this element against which our whole nature revolts, as in itself opposed to

the true law of the universe, is at once and for ever over when *the good man* goes to his rest. For him there is no more useless effort, no more baffling pursuit, no more ill-directed exertion, no more weariness of the flesh or of the spirit, but calm, contented, eternal rest.

Yet were this all the gain would be but negative. But the text says far more; it says, "Their works follow them." Some would take this to mean, the reward of past works goes with the Christian into paradise. True indeed it is in a very practical sense that the peace and blessedness *are* rewards. But a work is one thing, and its reward is another; and without good reason we should not assume that they are identified by the language of Scripture. Others, again, would have it that the memory of past works is meant, an explanation open not only to the same objection, but to the far more formidable one that it would seem to represent the soul of the Christian as dwelling for ever with complacency on the thoughts of his own merits. But if the memory or the reward of works is not meant, at least chiefly or primarily, we are led on to a view which, I doubt not, is at once true and infinitely important to us all. I take the works to mean the living acts, the deeds which characterize the faithful servant of God as such, the results and proofs of the inner life on earth. I take it to mean that on his departure hence the man, the conscious man, bears with him those faculties, and is permitted and enabled to do those works, in such form and such degree as may be consistent with his condition in the intermediate state. The works themselves, the energies and the

results, go with him. He is not therefore, as some would tell us, in a state of dim unconsciousness, nor merely in a state of extatic trance, visited by gleams of heavenly splendour, or visions of a more glorious hereafter; he is in a state of action, doing works which differ from his works in this life mainly in that the element of struggle, of painful effort, of an all-but perpetual sense of failure and disappointment, is withdrawn, and replaced by a sabbatic rest—a rest not of idleness or vacuity, but of unbroken, untroubled action.

This I take to be the special distinction between the revelation granted to Christians touching that unseen world, and the highest anticipations of holy and deep-hearted men in olden times. This I believe to be the answer to the question so often asked by patriarch, by psalmist, and by prophet—asked not indeed in hopelessness, not in blank despondency or very despair, as some would have us believe, but asked certainly with a feeling of intense anxiety, under the consciousness that, whatever might be their hopes or anticipations, no clear light from heaven had as yet been thrown upon the realm of Sheol. An answer will be given to the question, "Shall the dead praise Thee? Will there be remembrance of Thee in that region where all else is forgotten?" "Yes," is now the answer; "for the works of the faithful go with them." "What works?" do we ask? First, undoubtedly, the works which are the very life of the Christian, the very works about which those questionings were so anxiously concerned — the work of praising God, of commemorating all the manifestations of goodness and love. Of that we are assured by

very plain declarations in Holy Writ. That is a work represented with singular vividness in the rich imagery of the book of Revelation. What else mean the golden harps, the loud hosannas, the triumphant exclamations of the saints who surround the throne? In fact, whatever else may be accepted or doubted by those who do not believe the intermediate state to be one of unconsciousness, of this they are fully assured—the work of devotion is its essential characteristic. But we are told even more than this. We have distinct statements that the work of intercession for the Church Militant is constantly carried on by those spirits who, in the mystic language of the book of Revelation, are described as reposing in the very holiest part of the sanctuary—under the altar. That intercessory prayer speaks of the continuance and liveliness of the strongest passion, which is developed in the human spirit by sympathy with God's children in their efforts and trials. Were this all, it would give us an insight into that unknown world which would take from us all feeling of blankness or misgiving as to the state of its occupants. It would enable us to understand much of what is involved in the promise of the Redeemer, that souls which become His are with Him at once in Paradise; it would enable us to feel the force of St. Paul's words, that "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord;" that although to him to live was Christ, yet that to depart was far better, better, as it could only be as giving him the realization of what he hoped for—a life made perfect in bliss, because made perfect in holiness, in the presence of his

God. And may we not go one step further still? May we not believe that in that assurance is contained a promise that all other works, without which the spiritual life would seem maimed and imperfect, must be the portion of the saints? So much would seem to be implied in the statement that they are filled with the fruits of righteousness until the day of Christ. We cannot conceive them as living, and not engaged, by God's gracious permission, in acts of pious ministration. They belong to that glorious company of heaven whose presence we recognize in our highest act of devotion; and though we do not think of them as mediators or independent agents, we may, not without scriptural warrant, venture to assume that they still think of us. Following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, they must needs be associated with Him in those acts of love and power whereby He manifests His presence, and fulfils His promise to the Church.

It may be you feel that in thus inquiring into the meaning of a most deep and mysterious saying, we tread on dangerous grounds. Yet when Holy Scripture opens a glimpse into that region into which we shall so soon enter—when it deigns to lift the veil, though it be but partially—it is no unholy curiosity which bids us fix our thoughts upon it. And if, as I venture to hope, this endeavour helps us in our daily work, it would be weak to be deterred from it by fear of blame or misrepresentation. The great practical value of the truth that our works will go with us, is this:—if evil, they will go with us into a state which, whatever may be the meaning of the metaphorical expres-

sions of Holy Writ, must, as the Word and our conscience tell us, be one of remorse, and if of remorse, of fearful torment. Just consider what must be the result if those works, which now conscience condemns, which you cannot do without shame, or look back on without loathing, were to go on, apart from all accidental results—apart from the motives which now actuate you, the gratification which now allures you—if hatred or envy, or fierce desires, go on working, if at all, more fiercely than ever. Who would dare to encounter that hell?—a hell however inseparable from the perpetuity of living consciousness. But, on the other hand, what motives for exertion, what support under trial, what unspeakable consolation in hours of disappointment, to be assured that whatever good work you are doing will be yours in higher degree; that the character which those works are forming will be permanent, differing only in its advancing development; that although the objects towards which it is for a season directed, and the sphere in which it is now exercised, will pass away—how soon, what matter if this high hope be certain!—yet that the love of truth, the search after truth, which now brings your noblest faculties into play, will be stronger far and never baffled; yet that the love of justice, the determination to sustain the right which now is the sure attestation of affinity to God, will be your eternal characteristic; yet that the mastery over all the conflicting tendencies of your complex nature, which is here attained but imperfectly, and by dint of fearful struggle, will be achieved by the perfect co-ordination of all powers

under the control of a spirit thoroughly and eternally harmonizing with the Divine. Dreams some may hold such aspirations to be, yet even they may admit their grandeur; but realities, the only realities worth knowing and acting upon, the Word of God proclaims them to be, bidding us in all life's trials and sorrows, above all, in life's fearful and protracted struggles and temptations, to look forward to a rest, in which all evil will cease, and all good will be perfectly developed in the presence of the living God.

## SERMON XV.

### Ministering Spirits.

"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation?"—Hebrews i. 14.

The universe presents a very different aspect to him who looks upon it only with the eye of sense, and to him who looks through it also with the eye of faith. To the former it is indeed full of marvels, supplying material for endless inquiry, rewarding all earnest and patient research with results of incalculable value; but if he be no more, if he be, as we are told that a strict natural philosopher must be, a mere materialist, it is to him but an assemblage of forces guided by no conscious intelligence, controlled by no supreme Will. To the latter it is full of deep meanings, a manifestation of Divine power, interpenetrated with a Divine life, giving throughout intimations of a Divine presence, accomplishing purposes of infinite wisdom and love.

Such is the aspect of the universe to all who receive and realize the first principle of all faith—the existence and supremacy of a personal God; but Holy Scripture opens to our contemplation a vast series of facts touching the inhabitants of that spiritual world, and their relations to ourselves. From the beginning to the end the

book of life presents to us myriads of spiritual powers and intelligences performing the behests of God, excelling in might, rejoicing to do His will. The orderly succession of living creatures, beginning with the rudimentary cell and culminating in man, comes then to an abrupt end so far as physical science extends; but when we accept the clear declarations of Scripture, we find that the law of continuity reaches into realms far transcending our faculties of observation. The vast void is peopled, the chain of being is completed, and, guided by unerring utterances, the thoughts of man ascend even into the presence chamber, where the Seraphim in awful adoration veil their faces, where the ministering Angels, to whom is entrusted the care of Christ's little ones, ever behold the face of our Father Which is in heaven.

It is evident that, in dealing with a subject like this, the utmost care is needed; wild and perilous speculations beset us on every side, and the memory of widespread superstitions, from which, however, our own Church is singularly exempt, may well make us hesitate and tremble as we enter on this region of spiritual thought. Still we have no right as Christians to turn away from any portion of revelation, and if we keep closely to the declarations of Scripture, reverentially accepting all that it asserts, rigidly excluding all that human ingenuity or fancy has superadded to its teaching, we shall be safe from two opposite dangers, which in all ages, in none more alarmingly than in the present, either distort or overcloud the spiritual sense—we shall keep equally aloof from fantastic delusions, and from a

scepticism no less irrational in those who recognize the authority of God's written Word.

Among the direct statements of Holy Scripture, none approaches so nearly as that which is given in my text to a definition, not indeed of the nature, but of the offices of angels. It is quite clear to any one who reads the Epistle to the Hebrews with attention, that the doctrinal system of the Jews bearing upon angels in the apostolic age was fanciful and extravagant. The germ of the superstitions which from the sixth century downwards had so general and so disastrous an influence upon the visible Church is found in Rabbinical traditions of that period. Angels were become the object not merely of reverence, but of superstitious observance, of direct worship even, if not as endued with inherent and independent powers, yet as delegates and representatives of God, as mediums through whom His boons were bestowed, His powers exercised, and whose favour must be secured by arts which formed no small part of the secret discipline of the schools. This system was especially pernicious, inasmuch as it did away with the need of the only true Mediator; the Jew who received it either rejected the Saviour, or, if he admitted His claims, brought with him into the Christian Church views and feelings which were incompatible with a hearty reception of the truth. The object of the apostle was, therefore, to show the absolute distinction between our Lord Jesus Christ and the highest and noblest of these created spirits. In the work of creation He was the Maker, they but witnesses or subordinate instruments. In heaven He

is seated on the throne which they surround as worshippers. He is the Son of God, they are His servants.

It is questionable whether the statement, "He maketh the angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire," is to be understood, as some hold, as indicating the subtler elements of which they are formed; or, as others, without any sure foundation in Scripture, would affirm, as identifying the angels with the unknown cause or agents of natural phenomena; or, as I believe, declaring simply that the name of angel may be, and often is, attributed in Scripture to any creature, by which or by whom God announces or accomplishes His will. But this we undoubtedly learn from the words of the apostle, that whereas the Son is the very brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person, the angels are separated from the Godhead by the infinite distinction between the Creator and the creature. They have their own glorious place in the Divine government, for they are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them that shall be heirs of salvation. But that place is one of complete subordination; all its glory consists in the perfectness of their subjection to the will, or the completeness of their accomplishment of the purposes, of their Lord.

Let us however look at this definition more closely. Our English version is open to misconception. Two distinct words are used in the original for ministering. The first clause has λειτουργικὰ πνεύματα, which might be more exactly rendered "liturgical;" that is, spirits who *serve God* perpetually, whether in acts of adoration, such as we find ascribed to the Seraphim by Isaiah, or

in their appointed sphere as agents of the Divine government. In the second clause we are told that they are sent forth, as their most special duty, for the purpose of ministering, εἰς διακονίαν; *i.e.* doing God's work, on behalf of His redeemed people, who are described as heirs of salvation. You will observe that this interpretation to some extent modifies the impression which appears commonly to be made by the text. The angels are not represented as occupying a secondary or subordinate place in the hierarchy of the invisible Church, but as serving God immediately, executing His will on our behalf. This leaves their due claims to reverence intact, while it takes away every pretext for undue exaltation of their nature and office. Indeed the condemnation of all exaggerated and superstitious views, which is involved in this text, rightly understood, is felt so strongly by Romanists that great pains have been taken to explain it away. Certain writers among them, who have adopted the system derived from spurious works attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite, assert that the definition does not include the highest orders of angels, the chief princes, as they are called in Daniel, the spirits who approach nearest to the throne and catch the full effulgence of the Divine glory. But the statement is absolute; from the least of the children of light to the mightiest archangel, whatever be their designation—thrones, dominions, principalities, or powers —all alike rejoice in ministrations for the Church as their special work, seeking not their own glory, but the glory of Him by whom they are sent; not absorbed in the contemplation which is their highest privilege, but

drawing from that contemplation the life and power, the light and love, which enable them to do the Father's will.

A very brief survey of the Scriptural notices of angels will show the correctness and completeness of this view, and may aid us to realize the close connection of angelic ministrations with the Church. The Pentateuch at once presents to us those ministrations under a variety of forms. Cherubim guard the approach to paradise, angels appear in familiar intercourse with the patriarchs, most frequently with Abraham, the father of the faithful, and with Israel, the ancestor of the chosen race; they come as announcers and executors of the will of God, whether for mercy or for judgment. The majestic phenomena which accompanied the giving of the law are attributed to the agency of angels, through whom, as St. Stephen and St. Paul * declare, it was received by the Israelites. Israel was attended throughout its wanderings by an angel, as Moses was told by the Almighty Himself; "Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared." To this Angel, who has been identified, and on good grounds, with the Michael of Daniel and the Revelation, are assigned offices of peculiar dignity and importance, insomuch that many see in him a personal manifestation of the Word; nor can it be doubted that this Angel is in a very special sense the representative of the second Person of the Holy Trinity. From that time to the close of the Mosaic dispensation the agency of angels is associated with almost every

* Gal. iii. 19.

critical event. Whether as Captain of the Lord's hosts appearing to Joshua, or as announcing God's purposes at intervals during the period of the Judges, or as beheld in vision, or in trance, or with the eye of faith, by psalmists and prophets, encamping around the tabernacles of the righteous, exterminating God's enemies, or inflicting chastisement upon His people, we have a continuous series of spiritual manifestations; all of them alike remarkable, on the one hand, for their harmony with the apostle's definition of beings sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation, and, on the other, for the absence of aught that resembles the features most prominent in legendary representations. The angels of God, when present to the eye of sense, converse with His servants in human form invested with no visible splendour, whatever may be the symbolic forms which they may assume when, as in Ezekiel and Daniel, they are mystically revealed to the prophetic spirit.

And now turn to the New Testament. Far from decreasing in frequency or in importance, these ministrations fill the sacred pages. We cannot recall a crisis in the narrative with which they are not associated. With the first intimation of the forerunner's birth comes the name of the angel: "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent unto thee." The same Gabriel announces the Incarnation; angels proclaim the birth of Jesus in heaven and earth, angels are with Him after His temptation and His last agony in Gethsemane. In His miracles the disciples beheld, according to His own promise, the angels of God

ascending and descending upon the Son of man. Our Lord expressly teaches us that angels sympathize with man, that His little ones are the special objects of care and love to those who stand nearest to the throne of God, that they rejoice over the conversion of penitents, that they convey the souls of those who die in faith to the realm of bliss; and that when the final judgment comes, announced by the archangel's trump, theirs will be the office to "gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity." Theirs too will be the blessed and glorious duty of accomplishing the work of grace; for He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. What need to quote other texts with which we are all so familiar? What need to refer to the solemn declarations of the closing book of God's Word, the Revelation of St. John the Divine? The passages which I have already cited leave no alternative. Careful as we must be not to admit into our hearts and minds aught that can savour of dreamy speculation, equally careful must we be to keep every truth attested to us by our Master, and to assign a place to the subject in our meditations not wholly disproportionate to that which it occupies in His teaching, and in that of His apostles, guided and informed by the Holy Ghost.

It cannot be doubted that a truth so attested and confirmed must have bearings of the utmost importance upon our inward and spiritual condition. At present it will suffice to bring to your remembrance a few of the

least questionable and most practical of those bearings. We have good reason to believe that the unfallen spirits are present at the devotional services of the Church. We are indeed sure that when we offer our sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving we have them as witnesses. We are told in the book of Revelation (viii. 3) that the prayers of all saints are offered in golden censers upon the golden altar which is before the throne, an expression which we know is symbolical and mystical, but which leaves no doubt as to the ministrations of angels in connection with the most solemn acts of the Church. And this truth has a great value as enabling us most vividly to realize the communion of saints as extending beyond the precincts of earth, comprehending every spirit redeemed by Christ, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost—every being in the spiritual universe capable of recognizing the goodness and glory of the Creator. In this statement we admit no doubtful inference, indulge in no fanciful speculations; we do but accept the plain declarations of our Church. Retaining the form of words found in the most ancient liturgies, derived, as I doubt not, from the direct teaching of Christ's apostles, and in accordance with the whole tenour of Holy Writ—at that hour when, if ever, our souls pour out their inmost and loftiest utterances—the Church bids us exclaim, "Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious name, ever more praising Thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Glory be to Thee, O Lord Most High."

Nor as regards our own personal feelings are we at a loss to discern the comfort and helpfulness of a living belief in angelic ministrations. I do not here touch upon the doubtful questions touching the guardianship of individuals by angels specially charged with their guidance, aiding, sustaining, or chastising them. But that each ransomed spirit, each spirit endued with religious instincts capable of receiving and responding to the love of God, is the object of deepest interest and sympathy to the intelligences which throng the spiritual atmosphere, cannot be doubted by any who accept the Bible as their teacher, nor can it but convey to him who believes it an abiding sensation of spiritual warmth and light. We all know how much of our inner life is a life of strange loneliness. We cannot communicate even to our nearest and dearest much that passes in the recesses of our consciousness. We are alone, so far as mortal sympathy is concerned, in our struggles against sin; in our self-examination; in the abasement and bitterness of our repentance; in our endeavours, for the most part so imperfect, ofttimes so apparently unavailing, to raise our souls into communion with God. Beyond all doubt, for this there is but one certain and effectual remedy—the realization of the nearness of God, of the ever-present love of the Saviour, of the influences of the indwelling Comforter. But it is no mere condescension to human frailty; it is an adaptation to the wants and longings of our spiritual nature, wants and longings felt most strongly by the noblest and saintliest of our race, that our Lord should permit us to know that in reality we are not

alone, that we do not stand in His awful presence without the companionship of created spirits; nor does the consciousness of such companionship distract the attention of the believer. The multitudinous forms of natural life do but enable the thoughtful observer to realize the power and majesty of Him from Whom they derive their being; and even so the Christian sees in the myriads of the heavenly hierarchy but outflowings and reflections of the glory which absorbs all the faculties of his soul, which alone satisfies all the aspirations of his heart.

Nor can I leave the subject without a few words upon another point of very peculiar interest to us all. There is a feeling which has doubtless at times cast a deep shade upon the hearts of many. The sense of loneliness, which he, who does not vividly apprehend all the comfort and support supplied in the gospel, feels so painfully from time to time, reaches its climax in the contemplation of one crisis which ere long all of us must meet. If the spiritual world were indeed void of inhabitants we should not merely live alone, but we should die alone, utterly alone, in a drear, blank loneliness which no mortal sense can fathom, no voice of human sympathy reach in accents of consolation. But he is not alone to whom the scriptural utterances are realities. He is not alone in the hour of his departure; for then, if ever, ministering angels are about him; not indeed speaking of themselves, but watching and aiding his intercourse with his Saviour. Not alone when the filmy eye loses its perceptions; when the subtle organization of his bodily frame no longer obeys

the movement of the will; when to the unbeliever all is so utterly dark and hopeless. Not alone when the disembodied spirit opens its eye upon regions hitherto imperfectly discerned by faith. Never less alone than then; for then it enters the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, surrounded by the innumerable company of angels. Then it first realizes all that is contained in the words which describe their ministrations. Then it knows what it is to be with Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, in the general assembly and Church of the first-born which are written in heaven, hearing the unspeakable words to which St. Paul listened, but which it is not lawful or possible for man to utter; even there where St. John beheld all the angels who stood before the throne, and about the elders, and about the four beasts, and fell down before the throne on their faces and worshipped God, saying, "Amen; blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen."

"O everlasting God, Who hast ordained and constituted the services of angels and men in a wonderful order; mercifully grant that as Thy holy angels do Thee service in heaven, so by Thy appointment they may succour and defend us on earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

## SERMON XVI.

### The Holy Spirit as Reprover.

"When He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."—John xvi. 8.

The portion of our Lord's last discourse with His disciples which has been read this morning deals with questions of exceeding interest, and, as might be expected, considering the subjects to which they refer, of no small difficulty. The character and effects of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, by which the work of Christ was to be brought to bear upon the conscience of man, are presented under two aspects, in reference to those who had already accepted Christ as their Saviour, and to those who had rejected Him, or to whom He was unknown. With regard to the former, our Lord describes the office of the Spirit as that of a guide and interpreter: "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." It is not my intention to discuss this part of the subject at present; but it must be borne in mind, because it will prevent some confusion in meditating upon the meaning of those words which, together with the immediate context, will occupy our attention this morning. What is the office, what is the work of the Spirit in refer-

ence to the world? It is stated generally in one word—"reprove." "He will reprove the world;" it is stated specifically under three heads—sin, righteousness, and judgment.

What then is the exact meaning of this word "reprove"? The word (ἐλέγχω) which it represents occurs not unfrequently in the New Testament, and our translators felt that no English synonym could be given exactly corresponding to it. They render it therefore sometimes by the word convince, in the sense however of convict, thus, "Which of you convinceth or convicts Me of sin?"—a saying of great importance, since it is recorded by St. John, and bears directly upon the first clause in the text, "He shall reprove or convict the world of sin." Closely connected with this is the sense "rebuke" or "reprove," the object of the conviction being either to make a deep impression upon the conscience, as in the book of Revelation, where it has a loving object, "As many as I love I rebuke (ἐλέγχω) and chasten;" or, if that impression be resisted, if the conscience thus appealed to remains obdurate, to seal and justify the condemnation, as in the epistle of Jude: "To execute judgment upon all, and to convince" (that is, convict) "all that are ungodly among them." This accords in fact with the meaning of the word as it is used in Homer, and with its probable etymology and Sanscrit origin, shame being the radical signification. Still, as regards the general usage, you will find in nearly every passage where the word occurs the general sense of producing a conviction, giving a proof which cannot be gainsayed. In later classical Greek that proof is addressed, I

believe, almost exclusively to the intellect; but in the language of Holy Writ it is addressed to the conscience, having the special object of awakening it to the consciousness of misdoings and shortcomings, and, provided that a spark of spiritual life remains in it, of preparing it for restoration to communion with God.

With regard to the first clause, "He shall convince the world of sin," there is no difficulty in the interpretation, the real question will be as to its application. The best comment is to be found in the account of St. Peter's speech, delivered on the day of Pentecost. The effusion of the Holy Ghost bore witness to our Lord, and was a fulfilment of His promise. These are St. Peter's words:—"Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see, and hear." The immediate object of that discourse was to convince the people then present (who in a very remarkable manner represented the different nations of the world) of the sinfulness of their unbelief: to use St. Peter's words again, "This Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and signs which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye also know, Him ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain;" and he closes the discourse thus, "God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ, Whom ye crucified." The effect was instantaneous and complete: when they heard this they were pricked in their heart, smitten with sharp compunction, convinced, put to shame, and convicted of sin, the sin of having resisted clear evidence and un-

mistakable manifestations of Divine power and love. So far all is clear; and as we follow the sacred narrative, bearing in mind the teaching of the great apostles, we find everywhere illustrations of the same truth, that the first effect of the ministration of the Spirit was always to convince men of sin, and to bring them in an agony of shame and remorse to the feet of their Saviour.

But clear as the interpretation is, doubt may exist as to its present application, a question of vital importance to ourselves both in reference to our self-examination, and to the spirit in which we should judge our fellow-men. Unbelief in Christ, rejection of His claims to our allegiance, is now commonly spoken of as a matter unconnected with moral or spiritual aberration, a state of mind, if to be regretted at all, still to be regarded as blameless, as an inevitable result of a man's intellectual habits or powers. Now I will at once admit that it would be the height of uncharitableness to accuse any individual of personal guilt for what he may feel to be inability to recognize the superhuman and Divine in our religion. For aught we know the mind of such a man may be going through a process, of which some of us have probably an experimental knowledge, he may be laboriously and earnestly searching after truth, resolute not to rest satisfied with half convictions, nor to admit any evidence which has not been thoroughly sifted. For aught we know, such a man may be destined to do the greatest work assigned to a mortal, that of bringing all the powers elicited and developed in severe spiritual conflicts to bear upon the hearts of his fellows, and when he has himself won the victory over the powers

of darkness, to become a channel by which faith may be communicated to others. Who has not welcomed with heartfelt joy the attestation which, even in the halfway between unbelief and perfect faith, many an inquirer has borne to the majesty and power of truths which are the very mainspring of the Christian's life? But whatever may be the issue of such a process, whether it be for good or for evil, whether the soul passes out of it into light, or relapses into utter darkness, I would bespeak your serious attention to two facts bearing directly upon the question whether, considered in itself, without reference to special cases of mental disturbances, unbelief is of the nature of sin; whether our conscience, fairly questioned, acknowledges the truth of our Lord's repeated declaration, that he who believeth not incurs condemnation. The first fact is, that no man ever yet passed out of the state of unbelief into the state of faith without an intense consciousness that his previous unbelief was sinful. What we have felt in that crisis—we who know aught of the change—was that we had been guilty in rejecting previous appeals to our conscience; that we had insulted God by rejecting the testimony which He gives to His Son; that we had been guilty in resisting repeated warnings, repeated invitations, inner voices stirring the depths of our hearts; and that the guilt was not merely owing to mental obtuseness, or to intellectual movements, but to something in our hearts struggling against a conviction which, once admitted, would involve painful sacrifices, or painful efforts, and would bring as its first effect an overpowering sense of shame. This

is a fact which can be easily ascertained by any candid inquirer. Even if he be not himself conscious of the process, yet in the confessions of every believer who, like St. Paul, has passed from a state of antagonism to one of obedience, he will find ample proofs of the inseparable connection between conversion and a sense of deep sinfulness attaching to previous unbelief. The Holy Spirit thus convicts the world of sin, condemning the man who withholds his allegiance for any unworthy motives, and working "repentance not to be repented of" in all who submit to His will.

The other fact to which I refer is also a matter of personal experience, as such convincing to those whose consciousness attests its truth, and at least worth notice on the part of those who profess to weigh fairly all that can be alleged on behalf of scriptural statements. In every stage of the inner life, from its first dawn to its perfect development, the Christian is subject to one severe trial, recurring in a great variety of forms. His faith is liable to fits of discouragement, of obscuration; at times he seems threatened with a total eclipse. Which of us does not know what it is to lose our hold for a time upon the surest truths? to be shaken to the very centre by assaults upon our innermost convictions? "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief," is a prayer wrung from us repeatedly in our hours of spiritual conflict. Now what I would here ask you to consider is this: that sense of weakness of faith, of defect of faith, of partial falling away from faith, is invariably attended with a sense of guilt. We feel in our heart of hearts that it is the selfish,

or the sensual, or the proud, or the perverse element within us, it is the corruption of our nature, never in this life wholly overcome, which struggles against faith —faith in a righteous and holy God, faith in a loving Saviour, faith in a Holy Spirit, who exacts absolute obedience to the law of goodness and truth. This strange consciousness, inexplicable on the assumption that unbelief is wholly or mainly the result of an intellectual process, enables us throughout our lives to realize the truth that the Holy Spirit convicts the world of sinfulness for unbelief; seeing that, just so far as we are ourselves under the shadow of that unbelief, our hearts convict us of sin—sin great in proportion to the goodness of Him whom we recognize as our loving Saviour and our righteous Judge.

The following clause presents a different kind of difficulty. It is a real difficulty of interpretation, one which is well known to careful readers of Holy Scripture, as having given occasion to a variety of conflicting comments; yet, singular as it may appear, whichever of the interpretations proposed by sound scholars may be adopted, there is comparatively little difficulty in accepting and appreciating the application. The statement is this: When the Holy Spirit is come He will reprove, convince, or convict the world of righteousness; and for that the reason is assigned: "Because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more." We see at once that the ground on which the Holy Spirit will convict or reprove the world is, that our Saviour is received into glory, that He ascends into heaven and is withdrawn, so far as His bodily presence is concerned, from

contact with His disciples. So far, as we have already seen, the argument is stated by St. Peter at Pentecost. He represents the exaltation of Christ to the right hand of God as the proof of His holiness, and the coming of the Holy Spirit as the proof of that exaltation. It is because Christ has gone to the Father, and is no more visible to the eye of sense, that the mission of the Holy Spirit is at once needful and effectual—needful to supply the place of a bodily teacher, effectual because it raises the whole nature of the believer into a spiritual condition, and thus accomplishes that work for which Christ came into the world. With some divergences on points of detail, more especially with reference to the words, "and ye see Me no more," ancient and modern interpreters generally acquiesce in this explanation of the second part of the clause. But the question remains: What is here meant by convincing the world of righteousness? Some have held that it means the Holy Spirit will convince the world; that is, it will bring home to the consciousness of those who accept His guidance the need of justification by Christ; and will at the same time convict those who reject His teaching of utter unrighteousness. Now, that expositors who give this explanation assert a great truth, one of infinite moment, must certainly be admitted; but that it belongs fairly to this passage appears, to say the least, highly improbable. The meaning of justifying righteousness (for *δικαιοσύνη*) does not occur in the writings of St. John; and though the doctrine which is thus expressed pervades the New Testament, the expression

itself is peculiar to St. Paul. Nor does this meaning harmonize thoroughly with the other clause. It is by no means clear that our Lord's bodily absence from the Church stands in direct connection with the justification effected by His death and resurrection. We should therefore take righteousness here in the simpler sense as meaning the personal holiness, the absolute and perfect goodness, of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God coming forth from the Father and the Son, and attesting the entrance of the Son into the "glory which" He "had with the Father before the world was," works conviction in the world; or, if the world reject the conviction, seals its condemnation for denying that the risen Christ is very righteousness. The Spirit effects that work by the preaching of the Gospel, by the establishment and maintenance of the Christian Church, by bringing all spiritual influences to bear upon the heart of every man who, whatever may be his motives, listens to His attestation.

But is this statement borne out by experience? Is it a fact that the righteousness of Jesus Christ is thus recognized? As to those who are convinced thoroughly by the Spirit, of course no answer is needed; only I would point out that our individual advance in the Christian life is specially tested by our increasing perception of the beauty of holiness in our Saviour; that our first duty as Christians is to fix our attention upon the personality of the Lord Jesus, to contemplate Him unceasingly, to seek to be assimilated to Him by the sure process of spiritual contemplation. Let me say it plainly. Unless the Spirit of God forces you to study

the Scriptures with the paramount object of realizing the righteousness of our Saviour, you are not really under His guidance, the Spirit of God is not as yet guiding you into all truth. But what answer shall we give on the part of those who are still without—avowedly without? Is it or is it not a fact, that even they are constrained to acknowledge in a true and high sense the righteousness of Jesus? Assuredly of all the strange things that could be imagined, one of the strangest would seem to be that the Divine, the supernatural in religion, should be denied, and yet that the righteousness of Him on Whose person and work all our religion is based should be recognized—recognized not merely by sentimentalists, by men of hazy, fanciful spirits, by men accustomed to hold conflicting principles unconscious of their antagonism—not merely by men seeking to escape from the painful remonstrances of a half-convinced conscience, but recognized by the keenest, most thoroughly earnest, most uncompromising antagonists of the faith. Strange indeed, but an undeniable fact. Here are the words which, published after death, express the last convictions of John Stuart Mill: "About the life and sayings of Jesus there is a stamp of personal originality, combined with a profundity of insight, which must place the prophet of Nazareth, even in the estimation of those who have no belief in his inspiration, in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast." This goes far, very far; for as we find it observed by a reviewer, himself avowedly alien to the faith of the Church, "This supremacy of genius was attributed

to Jesus because Mr. Mill felt vaguely that there is a spiritual discernment intimately connected with the warmth and purity of the heart's best affections, and that in Jesus this Divine vision existed in unique clearness and richness." But far as this goes, Stuart Mill goes further. He adds: "When this pre-eminent genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer and martyr to that mission who ever existed upon earth, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and head of humanity." Surely, brethren, your hearts go with me when I say that we have here the attestation of the world out of Christ, given by a man best qualified to speak as its intellectual representative, to the fact that the Spirit of God convinces all, who care to know the truth, of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The last clause follows as a necessary consequence from the two which we have considered. The conviction of sin once thoroughly received by the conscience involves the recognition of the justice of condemnation pronounced upon the impenitent; the conviction of Christ's righteousness brings out in strong relief the guilt of those who, having sufficient opportunity of ascertaining the truth, deliberately reject it. But you will observe that the sentence is not pronounced directly upon the world itself; it impends over it, it will fall upon it; but only because, and only so far as, it identifies itself in principles, in feelings, and in action with that evil spirit, to whom Holy Scripture attributes the degradation, guilt, misery, and ruin of mankind.

The judgment, as our Lord here tells us, had been already pronounced upon that spirit; all previous acts, by which antagonism to goodness and to God has been manifested, culminated in the last onslaught on Him in whom "the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily;" in whom grace and truth and love were presented to man's heart and conscience. When the work of Christ was consummated on the cross the judgment at once followed; the sentence was executed when Christ rose triumphant from the grave. These are points to which it may suffice thus briefly to refer—the Christian accepts them as truth; others will assail them as the peculiar doctrines, the delusions, as they may hold, of our supernatural religion. But the questions for us to consider are these: How are we to apply the doctrine to others? what are its bearings upon our brethren? what are its bearings upon ourselves? One principle we must hold fast. The judgment will fall upon them and us, if, like the spirit who is the type and representative of all evil, they or we are animated by feelings in direct hostility to God. There can be no compromise here. We must be on the side of God, imperfectly as we may recognize His attributes; or we must be on the side of God's enemy. Doubt, inability to realize Divine truths, weakness and instability, are fearful evils; but they have their root in the nature which we inherit from our first parents; they are diseases which in this life can scarcely be eradicated. They stand on a very different footing from the bitterness, the scorn, the malice, with which representatives of anti-theism assail the God of holiness, the God of righteousness, the person of the

Saviour, the workings of the Holy Ghost. Against those manifestations of evil the sentence is gone forth, the last word has been spoken. Whatever may be the destiny of the being whom the Spirit declares to be the spring and source of all hatred of God, such must be the destiny of those who deliberately accept him as their guide, and do his work.

But let us never forget that the Spirit Who works these convictions, Who draws out the power of conscience, making us sensitive to sin, Who presents to us the perfect ideal of righteousness in the person of Jesus, is, above all things, in His very essence, in all His operations, the Spirit of comfort, of charity, of love. If we yield to His suasions He will make all things work together for good. He will, in the first place, raise us out of the heavy mists which envelope us as children of the world. He will give us light and help, whereby we may ourselves win converts among our brethren still wandering in the wilderness which we have traversed, and of which we know full well the utter wretchedness. He will constrain us to take an active, energetic part in all efforts which are now made with varying but, on the whole, ever-increasing success, to bring the truths of salvation home to the hearts of the perishing, to rescue our fellow-men from that condemnation which must fall upon those who stifle the voice of conscience, convicting them of sin, and who reject Him in Whom the righteousness of the eternal God has been manifested in all the plenitude of goodness and of love.

## SERMON XVII.

### The Holy Trinity.

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."
Revelation i. 8.

Two mighty voices speak to us this day, voices which express the movements of spirits raised to the highest sphere of contemplation, to whom it was granted to behold in vision, and to describe in living words, forms which approached, as nearly as may be possible, to a perfect manifestation of eternal realities, setting before us the very personality of Jehovah, the glory of the ascended Son. Isaiah and St. John, what Christian heart does not recognize in each a teacher to whom it is indebted for its deepest insight into the mystery of redemption, for most feeling apprehension of the tenderness and love, of the majesty and might, of God? When, indeed, we consider the special characteristics of these two witnesses and heralds of God's truth, we discern in each a supreme representative of the prophetic spirit, the spirit which is in nearest contact with the Divine, which is at once most susceptible to spiritual impressions, and most capable of reproducing them in heart-controlling and soul-elevating strains;

in each we discern a singularly complete development of the power which as a natural gift men call genius, but which in its highest form as a divine χάρισμα is an instinctive and living apprehension of eternal truth, combined with a power of embodying its conceptions, and presenting them in language which either dazzles and subdues us by its splendour, or takes sudden and unresisted possession of the heart by its simplicity and grace. Were I asked, What are the most serious losses which those minds have suffered in which the negative or sceptical criticism of our days has gained the mastery? I should count among them the loss of unity and completeness, if not of all reality, in their estimate of Isaiah and St. John. An Isaiah broken into fragments, emptied of the Atoner, deprived of those utterances which above all speak in him to our hearts; a St. John shorn of his prophetic glory, or despoiled of the starry diadem of an evangelist; these are poor substitutes for the mighty forms presented to us in Holy Writ, and recognized in all ages as most glorious lights by the Church. If, on the other hand, were I asked what have been the results of that cold, hard criticism, that unpitying application of the anatomizing scalpel in the minds of those who have thoroughly examined, and, after examination, have utterly rejected, the conclusions which rationalism accepts, I should say that they have been of no small benefit. They have enabled us to understand more clearly the grounds on which the unhesitating belief of our forefathers rested; to discern more distinctly than heretofore the internal evidences of unity of spirit; to

account more completely for the external differences of language and tone in earlier and later writings, both of the prophet and the evangelist, and thus to combine grateful and reverent admiration with a more intelligent appreciation of their characteristic excellencies. Let us now listen to the teaching of these two great masters, of whom the one has ever been regarded by Christians as the evangelical prophet, the other the evangelical divine—in the strict and proper sense of the word the theologian, ὁ θεολόγος, as Athanasius, Cyril, and Chrysostom call him, the man to whose loving and noble spirit it was specially given to unfold the mysteries and doctrines involved in the name and manifestation of the Eternal Word.*

The teaching of both, as set before us in this day's lessons, has two peculiarities. It represents the Divine Being in the form of a symbolical vision; it declares eternal truth in a form of words which expresses the doctrine of the Trinity so fully and clearly that, from the beginning, the Church of Christ has adopted them as the utterances best fitted for her most solemn act of eucharistic adoration—the trisagion of Isaiah interpreted by St. John.

The connection between the two visions is obvious, but it may be better understood if we keep in mind a truth which I have more than once attempted to set before you, but never without feeling the incompleteness and inadequacy of the attempt. I mean, that when we look at the whole series of prophecies and announce-

* "Theologi nomine insignitur quod de divinitate Filii nemo unquam hominum apertiùs aut diviniùs scripserit."—Suicer.

ments concerning the manifestations of God to man, we observe two lines of thought throughout, two threads of golden light running through the tissue—the one bringing the Godhead nearer to the man, the other raising humanity, in the person of One gradually revealed as its appointed representative, ever nearer to the Divine. In the vision of Isaiah the Lord God reveals Himself taking possession of the temple, not, as in other representations, in the symbolism of clouds resting on the mercy-seat, but in a personal manifestation: "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple." We remark indeed that no intimation is given by the prophet whether He on Whom he thus gazed showed Himself in the form of man, whether Isaiah in very deed *beheld* His countenance; but it cannot be questioned that a shape, a form, was there, present to the consciousness of the prophet, and that the skirts, so to speak, of the Divine glory were distinctly present to his vision. No similar manifestation indeed is recorded in the Old Testament, with the two signal exceptions, it may be, of Moses, to whom a true though partial vision was granted; and of Ezekiel, to whom the Deity was manifested: "Upon the likeness of a throne, the likeness as the appearance of a man." But for my own part, I cannot doubt that the early fathers of the Church, whether they arrived to the conclusion by a careful comparison of notices in Holy Scripture, or whether, as seems more probable, they retained the doctrine as it was delivered to them by the apostles, more especially by the last survivor and most completely inspired of the apostolic body, the doctor, evangelist, and

prophet St. John—were right when they taught with one accord that in this, and in all other passages where we find a visible and personal appearance of the Deity, we have a manifestation of the second Person of the co-eternal Trinity, a preparation or, so to speak, a shadowing forth, of His future manifestation in the nature of man. Isaiah may thus be understood as receiving at his first entrance upon the prophetic office a distinct intimation of his special work, the work which he accomplished with unprecedented power, even that of preparing the spirit of man for the coming of the Incarnate Word. You will observe, however, the intense consciousness of the prophet that he was in the presence of an unfathomable mystery. The most eloquent of the great fathers of the Church, St. Chrysostom, he who has done perhaps more than any single man, ancient or modern, for the interpretation and illustration of the Bible, who prepared himself for his ministerial duties by a period of absolute seclusion, during which he committed to memory the whole body of writings which he afterwards expounded, has left a series of five discourses on the incomprehensible nature of God, in the first and third of which he explains the symbolism of the seraphic forms in this vision of Isaiah. In these he dwells more especially upon the fact that those angels who represent the highest order of created intelligences covered their faces with their wings in the Divine presence. He treats this as a symbol of the truth that the powers which enable God's noblest creatures to approach His throne, to understand and to execute His behests, far from enabling them to comprehend the nature of

Him Whom they thus approach and serve, are best employed in reverent acknowledgment of His incomprehensible greatness, in exhorting each other, and in calling on all creation, to proclaim His glory—"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory." So near in Isaiah does the Divine Majesty in the person of the Eternal Word come to the consciousness of man, even while impressing upon His rational creatures the infinitude of the chasm between Himself and them.

And now turn to the vision of St. John. He brings before us the Incarnate Word—humanity glorified in a personal and indissoluble union with the Godhead in Christ. The two lines which have been ever converging now meet; the human and the Divine are One—God in man, man in God—in the person of Christ. In introducing this vision St. John represents the great doctrine of the Trinity in language, partly symbolical, which leaves a most distinct impression upon the mind and heart. The proclamation of grace and peace comes from Him "which is, and which was, and which is to come;" from the eternal, fontal cause and source of being—Jehovah in the person of the Father. But as associated, nay, One with Him, necessarily One with Him, as together author and giver of grace and peace, we read of the sevenfold spirits which are before His throne—one spirit essentially, manifested in the perfectness of a sevenfold operation, the number symbolizing both sanctity and completeness; and then in fullest terms, as at once the immediate cause and the channel and bestower of all blessings, Jesus Christ is described

in His humanity as the Faithful Witness, and the First-Begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth—that is, as man combining in Himself all the powers and energies of our common nature, standing out as our head and representative, the fulfiller of all prophecy, the realization of the ideal dimly apprehended by Gentile thinkers, marvellously delineated by Hebrew seers. And observe that in the same paragraph, by a sudden unmarked transition, as though the two thoughts were inseparably connected, the same Jesus is described in His divine nature as God, as He Who loved us—a word which points to an inherent and eternal attribute of the Godhead specially manifested in the work of the Son; nay, more, "Who washed us from our sins in His own blood"—blood which had that efficacy by virtue of the personal union of God with man in Christ; and in virtue of the power which appertains to Him as God, the inalienable and incommunicable prerogative of the Deity, He, the Lord Jesus, conveys to those whom He hath thus represented, redeemed, and saved, all that can be received by man. He makes them kings and priests unto God and His Father. Well may St. John wind up such a statement with an ascription of praise, which assuredly is directed to the Son, Whose work now fills the mind of the speaker:—"To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Follow this train of thought through the other clauses of this wonderful lesson. What have we first? The coming of the Word, of Jesus Christ the Son of God, described in terms which leave no doubt as to His individuality,

as to the fulfilment of His own prophetic declaration recorded in St. Matthew's Gospel—His coming to judgment. And then mark! Directly connected with that description, inseparable from it, evidently uttered by Him Who is spoken of as coming in clouds, beheld by every eye, wakening the conscience of all humanity to a vivid perception of the sinfulness, which called for, and which was expiated by, the agonies of their now glorified Redeemer: then mark, while our whole attention is fixed upon that Personality, we hear the words, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

I know not, brethren, how you may feel. I know how very feebly I have brought out this sequence and coherence of thoughts, overwhelmed and borne down by the unspeakable grandeur of the revelation; but it does seem to me that no one can read this passage, surrendering himself without hesitation or misgiving to the guidance of St. John, without feeling that in that great apostle's mind all attributes of deity were conceived as essentially inherent in God the Son. Pass on, however, and if any doubt remain it will disappear. We come to the vision, the counterpart to that of Isaiah, the vision which presents to us the eternal occupant and manifested Lord of the temple. First, a Voice is heard. That Voice is the very same which has already spoken in reference to the future judgment—"I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." St. John in spirit, that is, in a state of spiritual ecstasy in which eternal realities are vividly

apprehended, turns and looks. He is in the sanctuary of which the ancient temple was a type. He looks on the seven candlesticks; that is, he receives the light of a perfect spiritual illumination, in which all mysteries disclose their hidden significance; and in that light he gazes, as an Ezekiel or an Isaiah had done, on one like the Son of man. "Like the Son of man!" That is, undoubtedly, retaining unchanged the essential characteristics of humanity, all that belongs to the integrity of human nature, with all its capacities and energies perfectly developed. Like, yet how unlike! as might indeed be expected, when the full development of powers scarcely traceable in this imperfect state is visibly, and yet of necessity but symbolically, represented. What St. John really does thus set before us is the human nature raised, by an inconceivable transformation, to a state in which it becomes, as it most certainly does become in the Person of the glorified Christ, an adequate representation of the attributes of God. The sanctity of that Person is represented by the garments and the golden girdle of the eternal priesthood; by the hair white with a heavenly light; by the eyes flashing with the fire of a purifying, sin-consuming, soul-transforming holiness. The might, the majesty, the dominion and the glory, by the burning feet; by the voice as the sound of many waters; by the seven stars held in the right hand; by the sharp two-edged sword, even the word of truth issuing from the mouth; by the countenance as of the sun, His own appointed symbol and representative in creation, shining in His strength. Such is the form under which the beloved disciple, he

who had leaned on his Master's bosom, and had been assured by His last words of a more than brotherly affection, realized that Master and Lord in His glory, a form on which even his spiritualized eye could not gaze without mortal terror; for "when I saw Him," he says, "I fell at His feet as dead."

And now once more let me fasten your attention on the words then spoken by the Lord Jesus, which prove how necessarily the words of my text are applied to the Godhead, not only in the First Person, but in the Second Person of the Trinity. We read, "He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I AM THE FIRST AND THE LAST: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death."

You will not think that in calling your attention to these and similar passages my object is to prove the doctrine of the Trinity. That doctrine is the fundamental doctrine of the Church of Christ; it is the doctrine expressed in all her formularies, in her devotional utterances not less fully and distinctly than in her creeds. In those creeds it is indeed presented with great variety of form, but with absolute identity of principle; it is addressed as becomes the authoritative declarations of the Church, the custodian and interpreter of revealed truth, to man; addressed to his conscience, addressed to his heart, addressed to his reason, not as a judge, but as a fit recipient, capable of appreciating and realizing all saving truth; addressed, above all, to his will, demanding more than submission, demanding his full acquiescence and

grateful assent. Nor will you forget that, whatever may be said as to the words in which the duty and necessity of receiving those creeds is distinctly asserted or inevitably implied, that duty, that necessity, is involved in the command that all who are to be admitted to the privileges of the Church, to the state of salvation in and by Christ, shall be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. That baptism is the seal of belief in the one Name, and in each distinct Personality—in the Unity of essence and Trinity of Persons in God. That baptismal formula does in fact contain explicitly in substance, and implicitly so far as regards all vital doctrine, all that is stated in our creeds—whether in the Apostles' Creed, which does little more than recite the facts which are to be distinctly recognized by adult candidates for baptism, and for which a pledge of adhesion is given by the representatives of infants as the condition of their admission to the privileges of a child of God; or in the Nicene Creed, in which the great heresy which developed all latent tendencies to unbelief in professing members of the Church was formally condemned, condemned in terms which of necessity were adapted to the state of minds beguiled by a semblance of philosophy; or, lastly, in that confession of faith commonly called the Creed of St. Athanasius, but—as our Church is careful to indicate in the very rubric which enjoins its use, and to state distinctly in the Article which maintains its authority—which is accepted and imposed solely as provable by most certain warrant of Holy Scripture.

Let me, indeed, observe in conclusion, with respect to this last of the Creeds, that it is a confession to which those whom our Church justly reveres as the most learned and the soundest expositors of Christian doctrine have ever given unhesitating and unqualified adherence; a confession which, at the period of Reformation, when every formulary of doctrine was most anxiously, nay, jealously scrutinized, was not only retained,* but was placed in a more conspicuous position; it was then appointed to be read more frequently and more publicly in the services of our own Church. It is a confession which, while expressing most completely the mind of Western Christendom, embodying most fully the teaching of such men as Ambrose, Hilary, and, above all, St. Augustine, has been ever, and is now, recognized in the Eastern Church, in its "Confessio Fidei Orthodoxæ," as a sound and authoritative exposition of faith; a confession which, though needing, it may well be, such explanations as in fact are required by every general statement of doctrine and of the conditions of salvation, though in some statements it may come near the utmost limits to which doctrinal expositions can safely approach, yet in those statements has approved itself to minds which have combined in the highest degree spiritual instinct with intellectual culture. It is in truth a confession in which we may all join without any peril to our hearts, if we listen to its denunciations as warnings to ourselves, as imposing upon us the duty of taking heed to the movements of our restless intellects and over-

* See the foot-note below, p. 225.

busy imaginings; if in each formula which points out not merely a possible, but a real and very serious danger of some erroneous conceptions of truth, we fix our hearts on the truth so defended; if, in a word, we take it as a guide and a help in our prayers —following thus the line indicated by our Church, which begins her litany with supplications addressed to each Person of the Trinity, and in the most solemn portion of her holiest service invokes the Godhead in the threefold words of angelic adoration—"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts."

## SERMON XVIII.

### Testimony of the Church in the Athanasian Creed.

"They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee."
Psalm ix. 10.

On Trinity Sunday I concluded a discourse on the manifestations of the Almighty in the visions of Isaiah and St. John with a few general remarks on what is commonly called the Athanasian Creed, but which, as our Church intimates in the rubric which enjoins its use, is rather a confession of our Christian faith, a solemn chant in which those who have received the fulness of apostolic doctrine recite its fundamental principles, and declare their responsibility for maintaining it in its integrity. Something more than such general remarks may reasonably be expected from every preacher under present circumstances; and they who hold both that the positive teaching of this confession is sound, faithfully representing the mind of the Spirit as it is made known in Holy Scripture, and as it has ever been received by the great representative teachers of Christendom, and also that the truths which it inculcates are essential to the full development of our spiritual nature, such as cannot be abandoned by any

man without most serious detriment to his soul—they would indeed be faithless to their charge were they to shrink from impressing upon others the warnings which they have felt to be needful for themselves.

At present, however, I propose to confine myself to the discussion of two points, each of considerable importance; the one with reference to the spirit which animated the Churchmen who compiled this confession of faith, or by whose influence it was generally accepted in Western Christendom; the other with reference to the character and principles of two great divines, who represent in a very remarkable manner the characteristic principles of the Anglican communion. It has been confidently stated, and stated in words calculated and intended to make a very painful impression upon our minds, that the terms in which the doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit is stated, involve a condemnation of Eastern Christendom, and that with full and direct intention on the part of the compilers; and again, that the terms in which the Creed declares the absolute identity of the Divine essence in the threefold Personality of the Godhead, cannot be reconciled with the statements of Bishop Pearson and Bishop Bull, since they in common, as I may say at once, with every one of the ancient fathers, and with all theologians recognized as authorities in the great communities of Christendom, are careful to maintain that the doctrine of the Church is in no way opposed to, but, rightly understood, involves the pre-eminence of the Father, and therefore so far as regards order and mutual relations, the subordination of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. If

such a discussion appear to any unfit for discussion in a place of worship, or not conducive to growth in holiness, you will bear in mind throughout that it is forced upon us by vehement and pertinacious attacks, which have stirred and are now stirring the minds of Churchmen; and that if in any place such questions are raised, in none can they be raised with an equal certainty that they will be dispassionately and thoroughly considered. Nor am I without hope that the thoughts and facts necessarily elicited in the course of the discussion may harmonize with devoutest feeling, and by helping us better to know the Name by which the Almighty hath been pleased to reveal Himself to our hearts and understanding, may enable us to trust in Him with a clearer intelligence of the grounds on which we may look for eternal life.

The clause first in question runs thus: "The Spirit is of the Father and the Son; not made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding." It is held by some that the words "and the son" ("filioque") were inserted in the original confession for the express purpose of distinguishing the doctrine of the West from that of the East; and taken in combination with the general statement, "If any man do not keep the Catholic faith whole and undefiled, he cannot be saved," it is further assumed that the intention was to pronounce a formal anathema against the Greek Church. We cannot wonder at the stress which has been laid upon this assertion by those who, with very various feelings, and very different principles, are determined at any risk to rid our Church of this formulary. If indeed the assertion

were proved, it would be almost sufficient for such condemnation. Which of us could bear to listen to words converting most solemn truths into a denunciation against our Christian brethren, the ancient and orthodox Church of Eastern Christendom? But how does the case really stand? Those words "from the Father and the Son," and the word "proceeding," were the words invariably used by all writers of the Western Church from the earliest age; used without the least intention of marking a difference between East and West; used in nearly every case for some five centuries without any consciousness that a difference existed. You will attach special weight to the testimony of Hilary of Poitiers. He was better informed perhaps than any divine of the early part of the fourth century upon all points controverted between Catholics and heretics, whether in the East or the West. He was associated with the great Fathers of the East in the defence of fundamental truths, and was naturally most careful to avoid any expressions which could offend them, aware as he was that some differences did exist, not as to the substance, but to the mode of stating the same fundamental truths. But in his *Treatise on the Trinity*, a most elaborate and able work, he says, "It is here unnecessary to dwell on the relation of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son, since it is to be acknowledged that *He is of both*" ("De Patre et Filio auctoribus").

Take again St. Ambrose, a name universally known and revered: "When the Holy Spirit proceedeth from the Father and the Son He is not separated from the

Father or from the Son." You will observe that the former clause stating the procession is given as one about which there is no controversy, just as in another passage he says, "The Holy Spirit is truly Spirit, proceeding indeed from the Father and the Son, but distinct from both, *quia* procedit ab utroque." Other passages to the same import, from Paulinus, Leo, Fulgentius, and Prudentius, you may find in *Pearson on the Creed.* They might be multiplied to any extent; nor can a single passage be adduced from any early Latin Father in which the doctrine is treated as one which had been questioned. I will however bespeak your attention to the testimony of St. Augustine. A reference to the general index in the Benedictine edition will show you how frequently he used the same formula without any variation; but you will do well to study the twenty-third chapter of his *Treatise on the Trinity,* a work which presents in completest form the whole doctrine of the Church on that crowning mystery of Revelation. From that chapter I select this passage as conclusive: "In that supreme Trinity, which is the Godhead, there are no intervals of time bearing on the generation of the Son, or on the procession of the Holy Spirit from *both,* since the Holy Scripture saith that He is the *Spirit of both;* for He it is of whom the apostle saith, 'Since ye are sons, God hath sent the *Spirit of His Son* into your hearts.' And He it is of whom the Son saith, 'For it is not ye who speak, but the *Spirit of your Father* Who speaketh in you.' And by many other testimonies of the divine utterances it is proved that He Who in the Trinity is called the Holy Spirit,

is the *Spirit of the Father and the Son;* of Whom again the Son Himself saith, 'Whom I will send to you from My Father;' and in another passage, 'Whom the Father will send in My name.' And again, that He proceedeth from both is thus plainly taught. The Son saith 'He proceedeth from the Father;' and when after the resurrection He appeared to His disciples He breathed on them, and said, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost,' thus showing that He also proceedeth from the Son Himself."*

I do not quote these passages for the purpose of showing that the doctrine is true and scriptural, but that, being such, it formed an integral portion of the faith as held by all Fathers of Western Christendom, and therefore as such could not possibly be omitted in any authoritative confession of faith. It is indeed true that the Greek Fathers of the first four or five centuries used the word which we render proceedeth, namely, ἐκπορεύεται, in a more exclusive sense than the Latins used procedit. The ἐκπόρευσις to them seemed to signify essential derivation, for which they could not find express warrant in Scripture; but the terms which they did use were in accordance with the doctrine in substance; and those Greek Fathers who were best acquainted with the teaching of Western Christendom expressed the doctrine in equivalent terms. Cyril even uses the phrase, "Goeth forth from the Son;" not however taking the word ἐκπορεύεται, but an equally strong one, πρόεισι; while Epiphanius, who is most cautious in such statements, does not hesitate to say,

* Book xv. 25.

"The Spirit proceedeth (πορεύεται) from the Son, or from both Father and Son, as Christ sayeth, 'He Who proceedeth from the Father, and shall receive of Mine.'"

For my part I do not doubt that Waterland—whose *Treatise on the Athanasian Creed* needs only some few rectifications and additions suggested in the course of the present controversy—was right in assigning its composition to the early part of the fifth century, certainly after, but probably not long after, the publication of St. Augustine's work on the Trinity; and if that date be correct, or any other date for which a probable reason can be assigned, the words "from the Son" could not possibly have been understood by any to be directed against the Greeks. Certainly they were not so understood by those who at a later period, to whatever cause the very natural error may be attributed, accepted the Creed as the production of St. Athanasius. The question of course remains whether at a still later period, when the unhappy schism between the East and West had broken out, the words were retained—no man asserts that they were then inserted—and whether they were then uttered as a war cry by contending factions. Yet the question involves its own answer. Retained they were, and still are, simply because they could not be rejected: but assuredly when any Christian man repeated them, his one feeling would be, that he did so in obedience to the authority of Holy Scripture—that authority which alone influenced the great divines whose testimony I have already quoted.

When again we are called upon to consider the possible application of the statement to the Greek Church at present, we shall naturally inquire whether the teaching of that Church necessarily involves a substantial discrepancy. We shall certainly not find such a discrepancy in their recognized formula, that "the Spirit proceedeth from the Father by the Son." Our own ancient, carefully-worded, well-authenticated form we shall prefer as more comprehensive, less technical, less controversial; but at the same time we shall certainly admit that the other form may be used without risk of incurring whatever penalty may be attached to the mutilation or corruption of the truth delivered once for all to the Church.

But now turn to the other allegation: that the clause which asserts the co-equality of the Divine Persons involves the condemnation of Bishops Pearson and Bull. Now if the English Church ever produced men who thoroughly understood the bearings of words used in doctrinal controversy, who were scrupulously exact in their definitions of doctrine, and who had an absolute reverence for the authority of the Church speaking by its public confessions, among those men Pearson and Bull are pre-eminent—men who combined, as no men ever combined more completely, spiritual instinct with the highest intellectual culture. Such an allegation must rest either upon some misapprehension of the teaching of this confession, or of the intention of those divines. But what does the confession teach? Take the very accurate exposition of Waterland. "When it is said, None is afore or after other, we are

not to understand it of *order;* for the Father is first, the Son second, and the Holy Ghost third in order. Neither are we to understand it of office; for the Father is supreme in office, while the Son and Holy Ghost condescend to inferior offices. But we are to understand it, as the Creed itself explains it, of duration and of dignity, in which respect none is afore or after, none greater or less, but the whole three Persons co-equal and co-eternal." I do not suppose that any one will question Waterland's explanation of the true meaning of the Creed, or deny its accordance with the whole tenour of Christian doctrine; but it is absolutely identical with that of Pearson. He says expressly of the Son, "that He is of a nature and essence so totally like, so totally the same, that no accidental disparity can imaginably consist with that identity." Having thus guarded himself from any suspicion of opposition to the doctrine set forth in this confession, he adds that, "in the very name of Father there is something of eminence which there is not in the Son; and some kind of priority we must ascribe unto Him Whom we call the First, in respect of Him Whom we term the Second Person; but that privilege or priority consisteth not in this, that the *essence or attributes* of the one are greater than the essence or attributes of the other, but only in this, that the Father hath that essence of Himself, the other by communication from the Father." You will find a similar statement touching the Holy Spirit. "The Godhead was communicated by the Father and the Son unto the Holy Ghost, though therefore this was done from all eternity, and therefore can admit of no priority

in reference to time; yet that of order must be here observed—the same which is expressly mentioned in the baptismal institution, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." How could the doctrine of our confession be more distinctly re-asserted which teaches that "the Father is of none; the Son is of the Father alone; the Holy Ghost is of the Father and the Son"?

I will not detain you by quotations from Bishop Bull. In the defence of the Nicene Creed that great man—in whom divines of other communions than our own, in whom with one consent all Anglican teachers, have hitherto recognized a very pillar of the faith—has an entire section of four chapters bearing on the orthodox doctrine of the subordination of the Son, his special object being to prove that the early Fathers, who taught it unanimously, ever understood it in the sense so distinctly set forth by Bishop Pearson; a subordination of office, of derivation, of relation, combined with an absolute identity of nature, and full participation in the Divine perfections of the Father.

I trust you will consider that the discussion of subjects, which belong more strictly to the science of theology than those which I have been accustomed to bring before you, is sufficiently justified by the duty of vindicating the characters of two great divines, who represent most remarkably the spirit of the Anglican Church, and at the same time of clearing from the charge of uncharitableness a confession of faith which such nonconformists as Richard Baxter declared, not less firmly than our own divines, to be the best exposition

extant of the Scriptural doctrine of the Trinity.* In fact one incidental advantage of assaults on any portion of revealed truth, or on the statements by which it is presented in a systematic form to Christian congregations, is that it awakens interest to questions which, so long as they were regarded as finally settled, seemed scarcely to demand sustained attention. But for those assaults I should hardly have ventured upon such quotations from ancient and modern theologians as those which, I trust, have been satisfactory to your minds.

Yet even these considerations have had less weight with me than the feeling that the whole discussion tends to bring into stronger light the truth indicated in the text, "They *that know My name* shall put their trust in Thee." Know Thy name! What does that imply, but to know all that is included in the revelation of the nature and attributes of Almighty God? Every reader of Scripture is well aware of the infinite importance which it attaches to the word Name in speaking of God. It signifies not merely a designation, however expressive and full of meaning, but a manifestation of the Eternal Deity. The trust of His rational creatures in Him is commensurate with their knowledge of all that is involved in the Name. The

* It was in fact most formally adopted by the Lutheran and Calvinistic communities on the Continent—(1) By the Lutheran. See the "Confessio Doctrinæ Saxonicarum Ecclesiarum," A.D. 1531, § 1, in the *Sylloge Conf. Oxon.*, p. 242; the "Formula Concordiæ," in Francke's *Libri Symbolicæ, Ecc. Luth.*, iii. p. 19. (2) By the Calvinistic. See the "Confessio Helvetica" and "Conf. Belgica," in the *Sylloge Conf. Oxon*, pp. 41, 332; the "Conf. Bohœmica," in Niemeyer's *Collection*, p. 789, to which may be added Zwingli's *Ratio Fidei;* also in Niemeyer, p. 17.

early patriarchs knew Him by the name Elohim, a marvellous name, containing implicitly the mystery hereafter to be revealed of a plurality of persons in the unity of the Divine nature. They knew Him so far, and adored Him with deep awe and absolute trust in His power, righteousness, and good-will. That name raised them out of earthly and debasing associations, delivered them from the fetichism of idolatry, and brought them into near contact with the spiritual world; they trusted in Him according to the measure of their knowledge, and were saved by their faith. A further disclosure of the Divine goodness and love was made by the revelation of the name Jehovah, when the Lord made all His goodness pass before Moses, and proclaimed, "Jehovah, Jehovah Elohim, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." With that revelation was associated an entire system of typical institutions, preparing the way for a still more perfect discovery, at once quickening the conscience, making it sensible of the extent of human sinfulness, and indicating the conditions and principles of a future atonement. The forms of the living Word and of the living Spirit gradually disclosed themselves to the prophetic vision, never fully revealed, yet ever approaching nearer to a personal manifestation; but the Name itself in its highest sense was first suggested, then declared, by the voices which heralded the incarnation, and by the utterances of the incarnate Word. The full meaning of the words of angelic adoration, "Holy, holy, Lord God of hosts!" flashed upon the spirit of man when the Saviour commanded the initia-

tory rite, the pledge and condition of a new life, to be administered "in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." To the exposition of that meaning the purest and highest intellects of Christendom have devoted themselves from the beginning; and if the forms in which their exposition has been accepted by the Church are true and scriptural, can it be questioned that they involve issues of infinite importance to our souls? Can it be a matter of indifference to us whether any one of the leading propositions in such a confession is true or not? can it be a matter on which we can err in wilfulness or negligence without peril? We are responsible indeed only for so much truth as we have the means of knowing. Every man is judged "according to that he hath, not according to that he hath not;" but for so much as we have received we are, and must be, responsible. The warmth and earnestness of our devotions, of our endeavours to do God's work, will be proportionate to the sincerity and good faith with which we receive into our hearts that truth which the eternal Father has communicated to us through the Son and by the Holy Spirit. Our salvation from evil here, and from the penalties of evil hereafter, can only be secured by the access which God the Holy Spirit opens through the Son to the Father—an access of which the conditions vary according to circumstances known only to our Judge, but of which the certain assurance is inseparably bound up with knowledge of the Name by which the Church adores the Triune Jehovah, three Persons, one God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

## SERMON XIX.

### First Meeting of St. Peter and St. Paul at Jerusalem.

"After three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days."—Gal. i. 18.

The first meeting of St. Peter and of Saul after his conversion, a meeting decided by the deliberate resolve of the latter, who had before him a distinct object of the highest importance, recorded with many details by St. Luke, the Pauline evangelist, occupying a conspicuous place in this epistle, an epistle which bears so strongly the marks of the writer's personal character that the wildest speculators of the so-called critical school of Tübingen maintain its authenticity and integrity—that surely is an event which claims all our attention, brought as it has been before us by this morning's lesson, and connected with questions of the deepest interest to all who reflect upon the earliest records and present state of Christendom. Let us, then, consider in the first place the circumstances under which it occurred, and in the next place some of its chief bearings upon the history and teaching of the Church.

Three years, as we learn from this passage alone, had been passed by St. Paul—still bearing the name under

which he had been known as a persecutor of Christians—partly in Arabia, but as it would seem chiefly in Damascus. That time had been fruitful in results. From various intimations it is clear that certain great central truths had been communicated by direct revelation to St. Paul. He claims to have learned them, not from man, but from the Lord Himself, Who arrested him in his career of evil, and called him to the great work of evangelizing the Gentiles. That interval, whatever may have been its duration, is enshrouded in a certain mystery; but we may well believe it was occupied by intense spiritual movements, completing the transformation and development of the inner man. The work done then in St. Paul corresponded very remarkably with that which had previously been effected in the elder apostles under our Saviour's personal guidance during His three years' ministry. Nor had St. Paul lost any time in applying the lessons so learned. With powers quickened and redoubled by the mighty influence of the new spirit, he preached Christ at once in the synagogues, utterly confounding the Jews, who expected to find in him a zealous maintainer of their dogmas, and employing all the resources of his genius and scriptural learning in proving that all that had been predicted or foreshadowed of the coming Messiah was fulfilled in Jesus the crucified. At once came a foretaste of the afflictions which pursued him without cessation through his Christian course; his death was resolved upon; he left the first scene of his new labours suddenly and secretly, with a full consciousness that thenceforth all that he had formerly wrought or

attempted for the suppression of the faith would be brought to bear against himself, that sooner or later he too would seal his testimony by blood.

It is a striking proof of that great man's firm and resolute will that under those circumstances he should proceed immediately to the head-quarters of persecution—to the very place from which he had been sent to overthrow the Christian faith. There all would know him; there his old friends, now his deadly enemies, would be awaiting him; there, too, he might be well assured that his new brethren would watch his steps with natural and justifiable suspicion. Strong must have been his confidence in the force of the new principle by which he was moved; intense must have been his conviction that his new Master would clear a way for him, and bring him into new and loving contact with His own people. We might have expected that he would seek other fields of action, that he would preach the gospel to those whom he already knew to be the special objects of his ministerial labours. But he went straightway to Jerusalem; there he knew that the true centre of all Christian work was still to be found. He went there, as he tells us, expressly to see Peter. The word which he here uses* is, however, inadequately rendered by that phrase, and I will ask you to look at it attentively; for upon a right understanding of its import depends a just appreciation of St. Paul's motives and of the general bearings of the transaction; in fact, I believe that the singular neglect of most critics is mainly owing to their having overlooked its force. It is not elsewhere found

* ἱστορῆσαι.

in the New Testament; it is common in classical writers, and always means far more than bare personal acquaintance. In the case of places it involves the notion of close, accurate, searching inquiry; investigation into their condition, circumstances, and history; in the case of persons, a corresponding investigation into the facts of their past experience and present convictions. Why did St. Paul wish to see Peter? Certainly not as a mere matter of curiosity, not merely because he was the most prominent among the first followers of our Lord—St. Paul of all men was least interested in outward distinctions of any kind—it was because he knew that from St. Peter he had much to learn, because he knew that, when questioned, St. Peter would give him numberless facts important for their bearings upon the truth which he had already received. He well knew that nothing which St. Peter could impart would affect the mighty facts of the gospel, alter the relative proportions of Christian truths, enhance his sense of the Redeemer's work, the glory of the cross, the majesty of the ascended Saviour. But St. Peter had been for years the constant companion of the Lord Jesus, had seen all His works, heard all His words, been present at His death, seen Him repeatedly after His resurrection, been a personal witness of His ascension, and after the descent of the Spirit had confronted the Jewish authorities in the hour of their triumph, and had brought home to their consciences the murder of their own Messiah. How could St. Paul but long to see that man, to hear from his own lips the accounts of what he had received, and taught? He went at once, and after some hesitation on the part

of the disciples, related by St. Luke in the Acts, he found access to St. Peter and St. James, the only other Apostle then at Jerusalem, and, as he himself tells us, abode with St. Peter, whom he had sought—in fact, as the word which he here uses implies—apparently in that Apostle's own home.* He thus abode with him some fifteen days, sufficient for the full discussion of points which it was important that he should fully know, and on which there should be a perfect harmony among all the preachers of the gospel.

Fifteen days; what a momentous effect must such intercourse have produced in both Apostles! That is the point which seems first to force itself upon our minds. If positive effects can be traced, we see at once how completely some mischievous speculations which have materially obscured the fair aspect of primitive Christianity are overthrown. Men dare speak of enmity, of mutual antipathy, of mutual misunderstandings between the faithful follower, the first preacher of Christ, and the man by whose personal teaching the kingdom of Christ was spread most widely, by whose writings the mind of the Church has been most completely moulded and developed. Such a theory, unknown to, undreamed of by any Christian writer from the beginning to the present century, may commend itself to the least practical, most unscrupulous of men, the dreamy neologians of Germany, and may be welcomed by some sceptical spirits in our own land, using it as an engine of destruction against the foundations of all Christian faith; but it can never be entertained by those who follow the course

* Πρὸς αὐτόν, apud eum. *Vulg.* See Grimm, s. v. Lex. N. T. 2 b.

and ponder the words of those two leaders, those two greatest representatives of the Christian faith, from the days when in the blood-stained city, surrounded by deadly foes, in the midst of scenes recalling all the events of the Redeemer's accomplished work, they held deep communing, and learned thoroughly to appreciate each other's principles and feelings.

But you may ask, Can such positive effects be traced? I would point in the first place to St. Paul's notices of the resurrection. The great fact he needed not to be assured of. That he had learned from the risen Saviour Himself; that, as he well knew, was the foundation of all Christian teaching, the first point on which his early instructor had insisted, the fact which had occupied all minds from the beginning. He knew well enough the importance attached by his old masters to the overthrow of all evidence of its reality: he knew well the futility of their efforts; his whole spirit was full of the fact: no shadow of doubt ever passed over his mind from the moment when he heard the voice, and was conscious of the presence, of the Saviour. He needed no attestation of the mighty truth; to his mind all Christianity rested on that foundation. Without it all preaching was an absurdity. "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we," all apostles, all teachers, "are found false witnesses of God"—words, brethren, which should ever be present to your minds, if you hear men say that the resurrection can be an open question among Christians. But St. Paul, at the same time, was well aware that in preaching this central truth he would be frequently

questioned as to the details; those details he might gather in part from others; but to know them completely, to state them authoritatively, it was evidently expedient and necessary that he should ascertain them from the Apostles themselves, especially from St. Peter, their recognized leader and representative; and that he did so ascertain them is clear to any one who reads with due attention the singularly full account which he gives of our Lord's appearances after His resurrection in the fifteenth chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians. Observe the order in which he records those appearances: "He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve." Now we learn from St. Paul only, and from St. Luke the Pauline evangelist, that St. Peter was the first who saw our Lord after His resurrection. St. Paul states it as the very foremost fact in the history of the resurrection, and thus, as it seems to me, he settles two great points. He freely and fully recognizes the position of St. Peter, showing first that no shadow of mutual misunderstanding came between the two apostles; and, in the next place, that he derived all such special information from St. Peter himself, who in private and confidential intercourse could not but have spoken of that appearance. You will also observe that afterwards St. Paul notices another appearance, of which we have no other record, that to St. James, a fact also accounted for by the circumstance noted in the verse following my text, that on that first visit of the apostles St. Paul saw none other "save James, the Lord's brother." I do not know how far I have succeeded in conveying my impression to your minds, but I have long since felt

that these two statements in an epistle recognized by all as containing the fullest and clearest enunciation of the apostle's principles, supplying all the facts so skilfully and persistently misused by certain writers, throw the strongest and most satisfactory light upon the true relations between St. Paul and the elder apostles, and upon the truths which formed the substance and foundation of all their teaching.

But after all, it may be said, such agreement in matters of fact goes but a little way towards establishing substantial harmony in questions of doctrine. I believe it goes a very great way, and I believe moreover that a deep and honest inquiry into the words of the two Apostles will bring us continually nearer to a recognition of their absolute unity in all essential truths. This, however, must be ever borne in mind: The truths of Christianity, the Personalities of the Godhead, the work and nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, are infinitely above the reach of any created intelligence. The loftiest spirits see but in part, realize but imperfectly what they see, and find but very inadequate expression for what they actually realize. The mind of St. Paul differed exceedingly in grasp, in manysidedness, in energy, from that of St. Peter; the mind of St. Peter differed, it may be, in personal appreciation of his Master's human characteristics, in simple recognition of his ethical teaching, in affectionate sympathy with every movement of His sensitive heart, from that of St. Paul, who knew Him only in His glorified state, and derived his acquaintance with His actions and discourses from the accounts of other disciples. We should expect to find, what we

certainly do find, in St. Peter's epistles and discourses more of the sayings and actions of Christ, the elementary doctrines stated simply and strongly, with comparatively little attempt to show their inward coherence and spiritual bearings; and we should be well content to see, as is the case also with St. James's epistle, a clear reflection of the Person of our Saviour, to hear Him speaking, see Him acting as in the days of His bodily presence. We should, on the other hand, expect to find, what we also do find, in St. Paul's writings far more of a spirit in direct contact with movements of the unseen universe, vehement perturbations of the inner man, rapid alternations of darkness and flashing light, upheavals of the foundations of thought and feeling. At all times, in all periods of spiritual emotion, when we are haunted by perplexing thoughts, when we are beset by conflicting emotions, when the mysteries of existence seem overpowering, when we grope, so to speak, in thick darkness, or discern imperfectly indications of a light far beyond us, gleaming at rare intervals in the spiritual horizon, we turn almost always to St. Paul, sure of sympathy, sure of help and guidance on the part of one who has known all spiritual trials, and in the strength of Christ has achieved a perfect victory. St. Peter and St. Paul have both of them their proper work, and occupy distinct places in the heavenly hierarchy. But withal each of them has abundant traces, not only of a common influence—that of the one eternal Spirit employing both as instruments of His holy will—but of a mutual influence. The epistles of St. Paul have invariably large portions

devoted specially to practical ethics. Indeed the ethical or moral element penetrates, and is penetrated by, the spiritual element from first to last; and in that ethical element you find so perfect a coincidence, both in substance and in form, with St. Peter, that it requires some strain of attention to remember which of the two apostles is speaking to your conscience, and appealing to your Christian feelings. There is no difference whatever either in the relative importance which they attach to points of Christian practice, or in the fundamental principle to which all points of ethics are to be referred. The words employed by each have moreover peculiarities which may be otherwise accounted for, but which most probably are attributable to their derivation from mutual intercourse. When we turn to St. Peter's epistles, more especially the first epistle, we find certain characteristics to which of late attention has been specially directed. We find a close, most remarkable correspondence, in expression and in substance, between those portions which deal with doctrinal questions, and striking passages in those epistles of St. Paul which present what is regarded as his peculiar system of soteriology, to use a Germanism which but for the reference which it suggests to certain writings would be out of place. Now of all facts attested by early evidence, by the unvarying witness of the Christian Church from the beginning, by the concurrent judgment of all unbiassed critics, except some of the school of Tübingen, none is more certain than that the first epistle of St. Peter, with which alone I am now concerned, was written or dictated by that Apostle. Yet

within the last twelve months one critic has drawn out a long list of coincidences between passages of that epistle and St. Paul's epistles, which he argues are so close, so minute, as to make it certain that one must have been derived directly from the other; and with the not unusual rashness which characterizes the writers of his school, he draws at once the conclusion that this epistle, this grand record of the faith of the representative Apostle among the original twelve, this work, to which the keenest and clearest eyes of Christian critics have been directed for ages, in which all have recognized the very spirit of the faithful, single-hearted devoted servant of the Redeemer, must needs be a fabrication. Why allude to such perversity? Why but because it is one indication among many of the length to which audacity will go; one warning of the pit-falls in the way of those who adventure themselves in the mazes of neologian speculation. Rather, why but because it does bring out in the very strongest light the great point which I have at heart to establish, that if St. Peter's mind acted to some extent upon St. Paul's, if the older apostle communicated facts to the younger which St. Paul turned to good account, and kept in mind throughout his ministerial course, even so, and to a far greater extent, St. Peter's own spirit was moved, drawn out, developed by contact with the powerful intellect of St. Paul. Was it indeed possible that fifteen days, passed in communings upon the mightiest thoughts which ever exercised the mind of man, should not have wrought powerfully upon the mind of St. Peter, a mind undoubtedly open to all great spiritual influences?

Was it not the mind of him whom the Saviour had specially chosen to be a depositary of sacred truths—the mind of him who first uttered distinctly and completely the truth in which all Christian truths are implicitly involved, which, as our Lord Himself declares, was not revealed to Peter by flesh and blood, but by the Father Himself which is in heaven? Was it not the mind of him who first uttered the words given by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, first brought thousands to the knowledge of Christ the Crucified, first founded the Church in Judea, first admitted the Gentile convert to all its privileges and blessings? Those fifteen days, indeed, were followed by other days of unfrequent intercourse. The two apostles occupied different regions of thought and action, but in all diversities of ministration they were both moved invariably by one and the self-same spirit, both from beginning to end had one paramount object, that of bringing men to the knowledge and obedience of Christ the crucified, of Christ the risen Saviour.

Let us take one warning to heart. Let not our sympathy with any one form of Christian truth indispose us to appreciate other aspects of the one central principle, and thus expose us to the very serious danger of admitting influences into our minds antagonistic to the cause of revelation. Our religion is in two respects most specially distinguishable from all spurious developments of the religious instinct. It rests on the firm basis of historical facts. That is indeed the aspect which our English Church has ever maintained with peculiar energy, which has drawn

forth resources of learning and ability unsurpassed, I believe unparalleled, in ancient or modern times. It rests also upon a purely spiritual basis, upon its congruity with all that reason can discern of the divine attributes, with all that is suggested by the wants and aspirations of the human spirit. Some of us may dwell with special interest on the former, some may find fullest exercise for their mental powers in the latter; but in the combination of both will be found the true solution of all difficulties which ever have perplexed, and ever will exercise, the intelligence of inquirers into truth. St. Peter may have a special attraction for ~~the~~ one, St. Paul for ~~the~~ other; but that man will have a very imperfect conception of Christian truth, will have a very weak hold upon all central verities, who does not recognize the importance of the two aspects which they severally represent, who does not sympathize with St. Paul in the varied movements of his lively feelings and intellectual nature, and who does not also, like St. Paul himself, desire to see and know the old follower of Jesus, and to learn in his company to follow the traces and listen to the words of the incarnate Son of God.

## SERMON XX.

### Clement of Rome—Witness to the Faith of the Early Church.

"With Clement also, and other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the Book of Life."—Philippians iv. 3.

The name of Clement occupies a singular, a literally unique position in the annals of the Church. The unanimous testimony of the earliest and best-informed fathers identifies the Clement of St. Paul with the Clement of Rome. Accepting that testimony, we see in him the only Christian writer, whose works are acknowledged as genuine and authentic, who is mentioned by name, and in terms which attest his saintliness of character, in the New Testament. Tradition connects other well-known names with apostolic history; nor does any doubt rest upon the close relations between Polycarp and St. John, or between Ignatius and the primitive Church of Antioch; but, with the single exception of St. Barnabas, to whom the epistle now bearing his name is acknowledged to be wrongly ascribed, Clement alone stands out as at once a well-known, thoroughly trusted disciple of Paul, with that apostle's seal of highest approval, and as a great

teacher, the first indeed among all teachers of the early Church. For we may well recognize his claim to that distinction, when we remember that one at least of the two writings bearing his name was read publicly in many churches, specially in that great Church to which it was sent, on the first day of the week immediately after the usual lessons from the Canonical Scriptures, and that the only copy which until the last year was known to have been preserved, forms part of the volume which England regards as one of the choicest treasures of the National Museum—the great Alexandrian Codex.

A few words will recall to your memory some facts of importance touching the history of this epistle. For some four hundred years it was better known, more frequently quoted, more universally recognized as authoritative, equally remarkable for soundness of doctrine and depth of spiritual feeling, than any production of the post-apostolic age. After that time it still retained its general reputation, and is always mentioned with reverence and high esteem; but owing to causes but very lately brought to light, it certainly was no longer publicly read, no longer, as it would seem, accessible even to many of those who refer to it as still extant. The fact was that the spurious works, full of mere fables, and deeply impregnated with evil principles, well-known as the Clementine writings, obtained so wide a circulation towards the close of the second century and onwards, that they gradually usurped the place of the only genuine and indubitable production of the apostolic writer. For this various reasons are

assigned, the chief being that portions of those spurious writings gave a support not elsewhere found to pretentions which at an early period were advanced, at first cautiously, then more boldly, to the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome, as successor of St. Peter, who in the Clementines is said, in direct contradiction of the old and true record preserved by Irenæus, Tertullian, and Eusebius, to have transmitted his episcopal seal, with all his special prerogatives, to Clement. The result was that the true Clement disappeared, and a false Clement imposed his mischievous fables on early Christendom; nay more, has actually within the last few years furnished materials for calumnious misrepresentations touching the doctrines and feelings of the apostolic Church. During some thousand years the old precious document seems to have remained unknown, once more to reappear, and at once to recover its true place in the estimation of Christian scholars, when Cyril Lucar brought the manuscript in which it was contained to England, in recognition of the services rendered to the great orthodox communion of the East by the labours of our Church. England showed that it fully appreciated the gift. Edited at once by Junius, a scholar to whom we are deeply indebted for other labours, it soon attained world-wide recognition; it furnished materials to historians of the early Church, settled numerous questions touching discipline, organization, and doctrine, and has up to the present time occupied the attention of the most eminent scholars in England and the Continent—the names of Dressel, Tischendorf, Hefele, and Laurent, representing most opposite schools, being

specially associated with it—while the labours of Bishop Jacobson and Professor Lightfoot are recognized by the latest and very learned German editors, Gebhardt and Harnack, as having thrown new and strong light on the subject, fully sustaining the reputation once enjoyed by English theologians for extensive reading, accurate scholarship, and soundness of judgment.

Such was the state of this question, as many of you are doubtless aware, up to the latter end of last year. We had two epistles, one undoubtedly the genuine work of Clement, one different in style and character, yet certainly of high antiquity, both however with considerable defects, many words throughout being illegible, some chapters missing altogether. Help came suddenly from a most unexpected quarter. A Greek Bishop, Bryennius, Metropolitan of Serre, a diocese at no great distance from Satonica, lately notorious for the outburst of Mahometan fanaticism, came to the rescue. He possessed peculiar qualifications, having passed through a course of theological and critical study in Europe, being fully conversant with the results of modern thought, and withal a thorough Greek in religion, in tone of mind, in ability and sympathies, writing his own noble language with singular grace and power, finding in it apt expression for thoughts not easily transferred from one language to another, even when they are cognate and spoken by persons in frequent contact with each other. Bryennius found several manuscripts, of which the very existence seems not to have been suspected, in the Patriarchal library at Constantinople, and among others of so great interest,

that on hearing of them a most eminent scholar* at once meditated a journey to the East in order to examine them, the Bishop discovered a complete manuscript of the two so-called epistles of Clement. He lost no time in preparing them for publication, and late in the autumn of 1875 he put them forth, carefully and well printed at Constantinople, with a valuable commentary, copious indices, and an introduction of considerable extent, in which he discusses in a masterly style, and with remarkable ability and judgment, the principal questions agitated among critics in connection with the time and writings of Clement.

I feel that I can depend upon your sympathy if I express unreservedly the first impression made upon my own mind, when I read this remarkable treatise. It was a feeling of lively hope touching the future prospects of the great Eastern Church—a Church which during long centuries of terrible oppression has retained, unbroken and complete, the system of doctrine and of organization that had been long established when the Turks first made themselves masters of the capital of Eastern Christendom; but which, together with what was sound and apostolic in that system, has retained not less firmly some very serious corruptions in practice, affecting their devotional formularies to an extent making intercommunion at present well-nigh impossible. Such a work as this justifies the hope that this Church is now awakening in right earnest, commencing a reformation at the right point, not setting out with an overthrow of

* Dr., now Bishop, Lightfoot.

existing customs, but working hard at the foundation. That Church has never discouraged the study of Holy Scripture. She received some years ago from our own Church as a most valued gift a complete edition of the Septuagint, printed specially for her use, and she takes good care that the gospels and apostolic epistles shall be familiar to the minds of her children. But it is certainly an advance of very considerable importance, sure to issue in great and, I doubt not, permanent results, when master spirits in her communion, possessing her entire confidence, deeply imbued with her fundamental principles—principles, be it noted, in closest harmony with those of Anglican Churchmen—direct their attention earnestly to the primitive documents of Christendom. There they will find nothing to encourage or foster the tendencies which their warmest friends among us most seriously deplore; there they will find ample material for further development of their better tendencies; and they will thus be drawn, if by degrees, yet by sure and continuous stages, nearer to that complete union for which our community has always, and specially within the last few years, repeatedly expressed and proved its earnest desire. Now there is a peculiar suitableness to this mutual attitude of the churches in the subject-matter of the first Clementine epistle. What it specially deals with is the restoration of brotherly love, the removal of offences which cause or perpetuate schisms in the Church, the fundamental principles of Church organization, the clearing of the spiritual atmosphere of those baleful influences which, like a deadly miasma, penetrate into

the inmost recesses of Christian consciousness, and threaten the very life of the Church. Reading the words of this new teacher, I could not but feel that, just at an epoch when the body politic, under which his own communion had been long lying prostrate and enervate, is passing through convulsions menacing its thorough disruption, the breath of life is reviving among Christians, a new spirit developing itself, and a pledge given to those who wish for the reunion of all Christendom not enslaved to the Papacy, that a work is proceeding which will ere long make itself felt, and remove all fears, misgiving, and suspicion from loving and candid minds.

You may expect some notice of the points raised in the Introduction, and of the new facts brought out in the passages of the epistles previously unknown. With the former I must deal very briefly, commending the work itself most earnestly to all who care for the subjects therein discussed, and who feel interested in the mutual action and reaction of Eastern and Western thought. You will find there, in the first place, what I consider good and convincing proofs of some statements which I have already made, proofs which, partly in form, partly in substance, are original and striking. The appreciation of what was good, and what is perilous in the development of Roman Christianity, is such as you will scarcely meet with elsewhere, save in the writings of our own great divines of the school of Hooker and Pearson. As a Greek well informed on all controverted points, and holding fast to principles common to apostolic communions, Bryennius is a competent, and he is a candid judge. In no Continental

author will you find so acute and so just an account of the motives which induced the early Romanists to lend a certain countenance to the spurious Clementines. You will also find in those pages a remarkably candid survey of the bearings of German criticism upon the events and writings of early Christendom, a full recognition of the ability, learning, and acuteness of its best representatives, and as full an exposure of what I cannot but regard as most serious errors and delusions. Nor will scholars be dissatisfied with the form in which thoughts at once just and noble are expressed, a form singularly combining modern modes of logical reasoning with reminiscences of classical lore, reminding us to some extent of somewhat similar processes in the works of the two Gregories and Basil, among all the Fathers the most graceful, the most learned, and the most thoughtful.

With regard to the new matter in the original, the first thing to be noticed is the fact of completeness. You will now read the whole epistle without the uneasy feeling that what the missing portion contained might be essential to the right understanding of the whole. The conjectural emendations of former editors are confirmed to an extent which generally reflects credit upon their discernment; on the other hand, some readings throw new light upon the meaning. The longer portion near the end has a special importance. It contains the passage quoted by St. Basil in his *Treatise on the Holy Spirit*, which presents the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in a form strictly scriptural, and in full accordance with the teaching of the Church. It has many references to

passages in the canonical scriptures of the New Testament not found in other documents of nearly equal antiquity; for instance, to the first Epistle of Peter, which, though abundantly attested, has been assailed by unscrupulous writers of the school of Tübingen. It has also a passage which leaves little doubt that the writer was familiar, not only with the epistles to the Romans and Corinthians, but with the Pastoral epistles, which, as you are doubtless aware, have been held, even by less reckless critics, to be of doubtful origin. And that passage is remarkable on another ground; it exemplifies in a most striking manner the spirit which animated true-hearted Christian men in a time of the heaviest and fiercest trials which ever befell the Church. The epistle was written, as the best critics now agree, towards the close of the first century. The writer had lived through the terrible persecution under Nero, a persecution of which the horrors are scarcely conceivable to Christians, which never indeed have been described in their full atrocity, save by the French writer, who in his strangely interesting yet repulsive work on Antichrist, dwells with a morbid curiosity upon its horrible and loathsome details. That persecution had been already followed by others; indeed, as an able writer (Gaston Boissier) in two leading French periodicals* has lately shown, persecutions of extreme though fitful severity burst out repeatedly in that age, reaching a second climax about the time when this epistle was written. Yet these are the terms in which this Christian writer, this true disciple of St. Paul, this true

* The *Revue des deux Mondes*, and the *Revue archéologique.*

follower of Christ, speaks of the heathen authorities; this is the prayer which he offers to God on their behalf: "To rulers and governours on the earth Thou, O Lord, gavest the authority of sovereignty, that we, knowing that their glory and honour are bestowed by Thee, might submit ourselves to them, never opposing ourselves to Thy will; to whom grant, O Lord, health, peace, concord, stability, so that they may administer the government entrusted to them by Thee without hindrance or offence; for Thou, O heavenly Lord, King of eternity, bestowest upon the children of men glory, and honour, and authority, in all earthly matters. "Do Thou, O Lord, direct their will according to that which is good and well-pleasing in Thy sight, so that, exercising the authority granted to them by Thee in peace and gentleness, they may find Thee ever propitious to them." (Chap. 61.) Such were the arms by which the Church won the great victory over the world, accepting all inflictions unrepiningly, requiting good for evil, and acting literally up to our Lord's injunction—"Pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you."

Questions touching the second so-called epistle I must leave to your own inquiry, content to point out that the views of those critics are confirmed, who, judging from incomplete indications, came to the conclusion that the writing was not, properly speaking, an epistle, but a homiletic treatise. There is now no room for doubt. We find that it was sent to the Church of Corinth for the express purpose of being read formally as a discourse or sermon—a fact of interest on various accounts, showing that although both prayers and discourses were

to a great extent extemporaneous, or delivered from memory, yet written discourses, avowedly read as such, were in perfect harmony with the practice of the early Church. Written, if not by Clement, yet certainly by one of his successors, probably by Soter, it came with special weight from the head of a Church so closely connected as the Roman with the Corinthians, founded by the same Apostles,* and bound together by mutual acts of loving brotherhood.

If these remarks induce any of my hearers to study the epistle and the treatises more closely, availing themselves of the new materials, I shall feel that a discussion of subjects not generally dealt with in the pulpit has not been misplaced. One thing is certain, the fierce and pertinacious attacks made upon every document of the early Church have indirectly done good service to the cause of truth; they have rekindled flagging interest; they have compelled men of intellect to look again at points long neglected; they have elicited answers, some of which (I refer specially to Bishop Lightfoot's) will keep their place among the masterpieces of Anglican theology; they have enabled many to realize far more distinctly than heretofore the variety, the force, the coherence of the evidences by which the central principles of Christianity are supported and defended. Forms of great and venerable men, saints, confessors, and martyrs, stand out before us; we listen to their plain, strong words; we learn to understand and to sympathize with their feelings; they come close

* Such is the statement of Dionysius, one of the earliest Bishops of Corinth.

to us; the interval of time is bridged over; outward accidental differences of form, custom, language, disappear; we recognize human, loving, hearts throbbing with the same emotions which stir our own in moments when the supreme realities of life and death are present to us; we feel our brotherhood, take in part possession of our place in the heritage of the saints; and to pass to one special point, after the careful, close study of the epistle now complete for our perusal, we rise completely out of the atmosphere of hazy speculation which of late has threatened to obscure the fair lineaments of the Church in her first bright period of bridal freshness, which has represented Apostles as contending against Apostles, earnest, loving Christians as hopelessly divided, the Church attaining to a false semblance of unity by the suppression of living energies. All such delusions are swept away from the Christian mind; they are relegated to the outer region where unbelief in all spiritual and moral truth has its proper and permanent home. In St. Clement we see the pupil, the follower, the fellow-labourer of St. Paul, walking in his steps, devoting all his energies to the restoration of peace, maintaining apostolic order, bringing all questions to the test of Holy Scripture and Christian principle, and, as if with set purpose to remove all possibility of future misrepresentation, setting before us St. Peter in immediate connection with St. Paul as the model of Christian grace, of humility, patience, and self-sacrificing love. Whatever effects may be produced by the study of other writers living in other times, surrounded by circumstances which require long and careful researches

in order to comprehend their position, one thing is certain—the study of the few precious documents in which primitive Christianity sets forth its principles, its faith, its motives, and its actions, will bring the mind into harmony with that truth which to a Clement, to a Polycarp, to their compeers in all churches, was their all in all, for which they lived lives of earnest devotion and perfect sacrifice of self, and for which they met death, whatever form it might assume, as an angel of the Lord, summoning them to abide with Him in the home where love, truth, goodness, will reign for evermore.

## SERMON XXI.

### JUSTIN MARTYR—WITNESS TO THE POWER OF LIFE IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

"Seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith."

HEB. xii. 1, 2.

THE cloud of witnesses to eternal truth who are thus represented as surrounding the Christian in his heavenward course, by whose example he is stimulated to unflagging efforts, comprise the names of great worthies enumerated in the preceding chapter. Those names are all taken from the records of Israel, extending from the earliest ages to the period of Maccabean struggles. They are taken as representatives of all in whom faith has achieved the victory over the world. In other passages of this Epistle no less stress is laid upon the example of apostles and apostolic men who, in the short interval which had elapsed since the Saviour's departure, had already sealed their testimony with blood. The Christian Church has ever been mindful of the lesson thus exemplified. She has ever associated with her devotional services the names of saintly martyrs, of all who have borne faithful witness

to Christ's truth. Knowing well that no heart which is fixed intently upon Jesus, "the Author and Finisher of our faith," can give undue or superstitious reverence to His servants, she is careful to hold them up as models and examples. This is specially the case with our own Church. In a long series of festivals, from Advent to the close of the Christian year, she presents the great names of the New Testament to our contemplation; and though in the midst of engrossing cares and imperative calls of duty comparatively few may be able to attend those special services, all can at least recognize her intention, and be to some extent guided by it in their private meditations. It is a healthy sign of progress when thoughtful men are drawn out of themselves, and turn with sympathy and reverence to the galaxy of starry lights which traverse the spiritual firmament. These festivals, however, are confined to those saints whose names are written in unmistakable characters in the book of life; and it is well that a strong and definite line should be thus drawn. But our Church has not excluded from her calendar the names of others in whom we recognize true followers of the Saviour, to whom we owe a heavy debt for the maintenance and defence of truth. The so-called black letter days, though incomplete, and in great need of revision, show at least a sense of the duty and advantage of such commemoration. They may certainly be pleaded in justification of what might otherwise be regarded as an unauthorized innovation, if on some occasions, and in fitting places, we direct your attention to the names and writings of men who at great epochs

have influenced the course of Christian history, and left a permanent impress on the mind of Christendom. And provided that the personages whom we thus signalize are in the true and highest sense representatives of great principles, and that their work is such as may be profitably borne in mind in reference to burning questions of the day, I feel assured of your concurrence with my opinion as to the expediency of such meditations.

Not long ago I took occasion from a recent discovery to bring before you the name of Clement, the best and fairest representative of the period immediately succeeding the apostolic age. Passing on to the next great period, that in which the Church throughout its vast area presented itself to the world with a complete organization, a complete canon, and a liturgical system in all substantial points completely developed, we are at once brought into contact with a man who in a singular variety of aspects stands out as an exponent of its principles, and an example of its characteristics. The second century was an age of martyrdom, an age of struggle with a revived and intolerant heathenism, and at the same time an age of internal development; and in that age lived and worked the man whose name, singular in this respect in the annals of the Church, is inseparable from the first and most prominent characteristic, that of martyrdom. I speak of Justin Martyr, whose life was spent in the pursuit of truth; whose works are the first of any considerable extent in the early Church; whose memory, unstained by any dark hues of bigotry or superstition,

has been cherished in all ages and in all regions of Christendom as that of a noble and faithful witness to the truth.

This morning I propose to consider some points in his life and character which may serve to illustrate the habits and principles of Christians in their antagonism to heathenism, reserving for another discourse an inquiry into the bearing of his writings upon questions which have been raised touching the canon of the New Testament, and the sacramental rites of the Church.

The first point which strikes all who look at the accounts, or read the works of Justin, is his singleness of heart, his earnestness in the pursuit of truth. Converts were moved by a great variety of feelings to seek refuge in the Church. The wretchedness of man under the yoke of idolatry was well-nigh intolerable; the heart groaned under the burden of ever-accumulating and unexpiated sin; and among the crowds who daily sought for admission into its courts, the greater number were certainly driven by very despair of relief from other sources. Nor did the Church reject them. It sought them out; it welcomed them; it willingly accepted the contumely which they brought with them. Her most intellectual and noblest spirits dwelt with justifiable pride upon the contrast between such reception and the exclusiveness of the schools of philosophy. But distinct from those applicants, occupying a peculiar position from first to last, were others who came to the Church after calm but earnest inquiry—men who, before they came, tried and exhausted all other means

of ascertaining the truth; who examined the theories of conflicting teachers, not captiously, not hastily recoiling from those most opposed to their prejudices or predispositions; men who, after they entered the Church, continued to search earnestly and diligently into the true proportions and bearings of every doctrine which they embraced. Among those men one of the first in time, and not least conspicuous in all high qualities, was Justin Martyr. His had not been a life of mental torpor or sensual degradation. Like St. Paul before his conversion, he had preserved a good conscience toward God and man. He had sought and he had found germs of truth, the highest truth of theism, germs of which in after years he thankfully and unreservedly recognized the worth and dignity. In his native place, Samaria, at that time occupied by a Greek colony, among whom his family occupied a prominent position, and in Asia Minor, where he is found about the time of his conversion, he had studied in the schools of the Stoics, the Epicureans, the Aristotelians, and more especially the Platonists. He had, on the one hand, come into contact with sharply developed forms of materialism, not less consistent and thorough than in modern systems, rejecting or ignoring all indications of Providence, of spiritual powers or principles in the universe; on the other hand, with beautiful, but dreamy speculations, such as occupied and satisfied many a genial mind in that and in the succeeding period. In the beginning of the dialogue with Trypho we have the account of the processes through which his mind had passed, and of the first shock of contact with the one

truth, in which he found the secret of all truths, the end and consummation of all true philosophy. Well might a living divine, to whom our Church is indebted for the best exposition of our Saviour's miracles and parables, select Justin Martyr, together with St. Augustine, as an illustration of the parable of the "precious pearl"—a noble nature seeking for truth, and not resting till he found it; the man "who tells us how he had gone through the whole circle of Greek philosophy, seeking in vain for something which would satisfy the longings of his soul, and never finding what he wanted till he found it in the gospel of Christ.*

And let me here observe that throughout the period before the conversion of the Emperor Constantine, the most prominent leaders of the Church were men of similar character and qualifications. The attacks of sophists upon Christianity were met by men equally familiar with the teaching of the schools, equally conversant with the forms of heathen thought; men who had not adopted Christianity under the impulse of heated feelings, but as a system at once embodying all that was true and noble in human systems, and raising the mind into the sphere where it saw into the deep things of eternity in the light of God. The Church in which sound learning and high intellectual training are most highly valued comes nearest to the Church in the first freshness of its early manhood, when it encountered the principalities and powers of darkness with weapons wrested from their adversaries' grasp, and tempered anew in the armoury of Christ. The

* See Trench, *On the Parables*, p. 114.

Church has abundant work for all its servants; but it has been, and must be, as a learned Church that it holds its own and defends the vast provinces of thought committed to its keeping.

But now observe this. Justin Martyr, from the very outset of his Christian career, took his true position, that which distinguished him from all merely curious inquirers after truth, that which especially distinguishes him as the representative of earnest Christians. It was no mere intellectual appreciation of truth, no mere rejection of lower, unsatisfactory forms of thought—such might suffice for the transfer from one school of philosophy to another,—but it was from the beginning an entire sacrifice of all that the man of the world regards as desirable. Justin Martyr knew that in embracing Christianity he embraced death, and with death the accompaniments most repugnant to the feelings of the natural man, especially to a man of refined tastes and culture. What he saw at once, what he mentions repeatedly, was that as a Christian, professing the faith openly, he came under the sweep of the Roman law, which, as the latest and most searching inquiry has shown, declared that Christianity was not a *religio licita*,* that there was no place in the empire for one who when publicly challenged acknowledged himself to be a Christian, and refused to offer incense to the state deities. Justin knew that persecution to the death would be his portion; he believed indeed that it would be the portion of all true Christians till the second coming of

* See, *e.g.*, an article by M. Boissier in the *Revue archéologique*, 1876, p. 119, &c.

Christ. Let me ask you to look into this statement fairly; you will find it carefully discussed in such treatises as those by Boissier, and fully illustrated by documents of the Antonine age. Questions have been raised as to the number of martyrs who actually suffered: a singular disposition is sometimes shown to underrate the number; but take the lowest estimate, one thing is sure, that every Christian held his life by sufferance; in times of fierce excitement he had no refuge but concealment and flight, but in ordinary times, under the mildest rule of the Antonines, public accusation and public admission of the fact that a man abjured idolatry involved certain death. Look at the account of the martyrdom of some friends of Justin in his second *Apology;* you will find that when a Christian had been condemned simply on the ground that he was a Christian, two others, who ventured to point out the flagrant contrast between the piety of Antoninus and the philosophy of Marcus Aurelius, and the hideous injustice of such a sentence, were instantly ordered off for execution, not for interfering with the course of law, but because, when questioned, they too acknowledged that they were Christians. If you read the two *Apologies* which Justin presented to the emperor and to the senate, you will find this fact throughout openly asserted as one not open to question. His demand is, that any crime against society, against public morals, against the state, any act of insubordination or lawlessness, shall be punished, but that the shameful death which awaited the simple profession of Christianity shall be no more inflicted. You will remember that if Justin Martyr, like multitudes of

sincere Christians, had withdrawn from the public gaze, if he had sought the seclusion of the monastic life, or had been satisfied with a private and silent exercise of devotion, he might have been safe. In his time delation was for a season discountenanced; but he had a clear duty, a clear vocation, that of professing, of openly maintaining, openly defending, the truth on which he knew well the deliverance of man from the bondage of sin and death depended, which as he was well assured would win the victory, but not without the dread accompaniments from which timid or unstable spirits shrink in dismay. Read his two *Apologies*, in both you will find the same striking features. A calm, dignified, dispassionate maintenance of his own position, a clear exposition of the principles and habits of Christians, a remarkably free and generous recognition of all that was good and noble in those human teachers whom the emperors themselves and the best of their countrymen recognised as lords of thought, and together with those declarations, sad, solemn appeals to their sense of justice, appeals wholly unconnected with any feeling of personal fear. What he says repeatedly, what we feel to be the simple truth, is that death had no terror for Christians—there was no power in their persecutors to hurt them; earthly life was to them but the preparation for a transition which they would welcome, realizing as they did, far more intensely than most of us can comprehend, the certainty and the nearness of eternal blessedness. But what they did deprecate was the shame, the evil, the dread consequences of acts which would bring eternal ruin upon the perpetrators. Never save

from Christian lips did the despotism of the Cæsars encounter such rebuke; never was rebuke uttered more gravely, more earnestly, more effectively, than by the lips of Justin. With a full consciousness that it would be uttered in vain, so far as he was personally concerned, well aware of the bitter animosity which his previous defence of truth had kindled in the hearts of influential opponents, Justin delivered his testimony, a testimony repeated when shortly after he stood before the tribunal of the Prefect, and after the brutal scourging inflicted by the lictors—thus made partaker of his Master's sufferings, like the apostle of the Gentiles, whom in words and acts he had faithfully represented—he gave his neck to the headsman's sword. Among the noble company of martyrs next in rank to those on whose names Holy Scripture has set the seal of inspired testimony, every lover of Christ must reverence the name of Justin, a name which will assuredly be found written in the book of life, when "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."*

But in recalling the past let us not forget that for us the question is, What are its bearings upon the present? In one great point Justin has special claims upon our attention. Careful to explore all truth, whatever came within the reach of investigation he examined thoroughly; an examination which had a successful issue, because from first to last he was seeking honestly, with a sovereign regard to what was spiritually and

* Dan. xii.

morally excellent. Truth a man finds just so far as he pursues it earnestly; but the kind of truth which he finds must depend upon the direction of his researches. He may find truth in one form, that of matter-of-fact, of things which come under the cognizance of the senses, in the direction which at the present age, and in all ages of the world, has for many minds an exclusive attraction. Nor is that knowledge of truth to be undervalued; the strengthening of noble faculties, the success of efforts for the physical well-being of man, are results of incalculable importance. No efforts thus spent are misspent; we gladly acknowledge our debt to the leaders in the search. But the truth on which man's moral and spiritual well-being depends, by which he can be preserved in the midst of besetting temptations, by which he must be guided here and can attain hereafter to a state suited for the heir of immortality, must be sought in another direction. It will be found only among those spiritual realities which were indistinctly discerned by great teachers in whom, as Justin held, the Eternal Word planted the germs of living truth, kindling the desire of immortality, calling their religious instinct into active play, and preparing the world through them for the reception of eternal life; that direction which is distinctly pointed out by Christ, the personal Word manifest in the flesh, speaking to us in His gospel. And would we pursue it to any practical purpose we must, like the saints of old, lay "aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us," throughout our course encouraged and supported by the consciousness that we are not alone; that

whatever may be the circumstances under which we strive to advance, we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, the spirits of just men made perfect by their struggles, and by the grace which enabled them to persevere and conquer. But while we thus gratefully cherish the memory of the good and great who have gone before us, we shall ever remember that on one condition alone shall we run straight, be preserved from error and delusion—that of looking with unaverted eyes "unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

## SERMON XXII.

### Justin Martyr—Witness to the Gospels and to Eucharistic Worship.

"A cloud of witnesses."—Heb. xii. 1.

The personal character of a great witness to Christian truth, the first to whose name the appellation martyr is inseparably attached by the Church, was considered in my discourse last Sunday. I then undertook also to show concisely the main bearings of the uncontested writings of Justin Martyr upon questions of intense interest at present, an interest shown not less by repeated, and certainly very unscrupulous attacks, than by the numerous answers which those attacks have elicited, and by which they have been substantially, and very completely, repelled. That pledge I will now attempt to redeem; and though from the nature of the case it will evidently be impossible to deal in detail with the various topics which call for discussion, I doubt not that a statement of the main results of late inquiry, and of the grounds on which they rest, may satisfy you of the value of the testimony which Justin Martyr bears to the canon of the New Testament, to the doctrine of the Church, and to the great features of

its public worship in the age immediately following that of the apostles.

First, then, as to the recognition of the gospels in the three extant writings of Justin Martyr. To appreciate the extent and value of the recognition you must bear in mind that one is the report of a dialogue with an unconverted Jew, and that two, the first and the second *Apology*, were addressed to heathens, to the emperor and the senate. It would therefore obviously be unreasonable to expect that the names of the authors of the gospels would be mentioned. They would be unknown to his hearers, or would have no weight with them; nor could they in any way strengthen his argument, which was simply intended to show what were the true principles and practices of Christians. The work of Justin Martyr against heretics is lost. In that we may be certain, judging from the course adopted by all other controversialists of the same century, that specific authority was adduced in support of every statement. I would ask you for instance to look at the list of references to the books of the New Testament in Stier's edition of Tertullian. In the *Apology* addressed to heathens you will find no passage in which an evangelist, or other scriptural writer is named, while all his other writings are studded with quotations quite as numerous and precise as in the works of our own great divines. But though the names of the evangelists do not occur in Justin's *Apologies*, the distinct references to the three synoptical gospels, more especially to St. Matthew and St. Luke, are so numerous, that in the synopsis of Anger, a book which

I would strongly commend to the attention of every reader of the Greek Testament, they occupy a considerable portion of the work.* Indeed before the present century no doubt was entertained as to the fact. It could hardly occur to unprejudiced scholars that in the 388 passages where Justin quotes the memoirs of the apostles (ἀπομνημονεύματα), in one of which he calls them τὰ εὐαγγέλια (the gospels), any other writings could possibly be meant, especially since these gospels are quoted throughout the work of Irenæus, written within a quarter of a century from the date of Justin Martyr's works—so fully indeed, that a continuous and nearly complete text could be constructed from that source alone. It is however not to be regretted, considering the issue of the inquiry, that in Germany, where every novelty finds on one side ready acceptance, and on all sides suggests renewed and laborious investigations, every variety of hypothesis has been essayed to account for the coincidence of Justin Martyr's quotations with the text of the New Testament.

It is indeed somewhat strange that hypotheses which have been long since completely exposed and generally abandoned in that country, should have been lately reproduced in England, the hypothesis for instance of a primitive gospel, containing all the facts and statements found in Justin Martyr. But, strange as it may be, it has done good service, for I am convinced that no one can have read the *Lost Gospel* of Sadler, or Sanday's work on the Gospels in the two

* Anger gives 221 quotations from Matthew, 67 from Mark, and 100 from Luke.

first centuries, without feeling how much additional and unexpected evidence, what substantial and unanswerable arguments, have been thereby brought out. I would not, however, have touched at present on this subject had I not thought it important to state that, both in all general discussions and in works recognized as representing the views of extreme parties in theology, Germany has recorded a deliberate judgment that no doubt remains as to the source of Justin Martyr's references or quotations. In the *Review* of so-called scientific theology, edited by Hilgenfeld (for 1875, p. 582), there is a brief notice of the work called *Supernatural Religion*—a notice, as might be expected in such a review, highly laudatory, so far as regards the spirit and intentions of the author, but expressing surprise at his adoption of an exploded theory, it being impossible to doubt that each of the first three gospels was as familiar to Justin Martyr as to ourselves. The extent and character of his quotations are indeed shown, not only by the three hundred and eighty-eight citations of Anger, and by the careful analysis of Semisch, but in two works of Hilgenfeld, in one of which, specially devoted to Justin, he classifies his references, distinguishing between those which summarize evangelical statements, or give the general purport, and those which are evidently written with the documents in the hands of the writer. In the other, the *Einleitung*, published in 1875, we have the same result. To this must be added a further testimony, to which great importance must be attached. In an inquiry into the relation between Justin Martyr and St. John's gospel,

Thoma, a keen and unscrupulous critic, in the same periodical, which admits none but rationalistic writings, starts with the statement that no question now remains as to the references to our present synoptical gospels, the only question being as to the recognition of the fourth gospel.*

Should you ask to what extent the references in Justin Martyr go, I would answer that they go to every great fact in the evangelical narrative, to the leading and most characteristic points in our Lord's discourses, to nearly all statements on which a Christian advocate would rely in setting forth the principles and tendencies of the gospel. Let me add, as a fact little known, and bearing on present controversies, the witness of Justin Martyr extends to some passages of which the authenticity has been questioned, not merely by opponents, but by believers in the truth and divine origin of the gospels. Here I would particularly refer to the close of St. Mark's gospel. That portion, as all are aware who know aught of recent inquiries, has been generally given up as a later addition—given up, as I feel assured, on very insufficient grounds, in disregard of the immense preponderance of evidence, of all manuscripts but two, of all ancient versions, and of all early fathers whose authority on such matters is generally unquestioned, that of Irenæus, for instance, being remarkably distinct and explicit. Now Justin Martyr, who has seldom occasion to quote St. Mark separately, noticing in fact two passages only in the rest of the gospel, actually refers in four distinct

* *Z. W. Th.*, 1875, p. 384.

places to the very last verses in the contested portion, in one giving the *ipsissima verba* of the evangelist—words which certainly could not have been a mere accidental coincidence, as might perhaps appear possible to a reader of the translation—"Going forth they preached everywhere" (ἐξελθόντες πανταχοῦ ἐκήρυξαν). Would any inquire further into this point, I would refer him either to Dean Burgon's treatise on the last twelve verses of St. Mark's gospel—a treatise which would probably have settled the question had not feelings of antagonism unhappily been excited by some harsh and angry words—or, with even greater confidence, to Scrivener's admirable summary of the argument in his introduction to the critical study of the New Testament, in which that critic, the highest living authority on matters of textual criticism, defends the section, and that (to use his own words) "without the slightest misgiving." *

But if not of greater certainty, of equal importance, is the witness of Justin Martyr to other books of the New Testament. The Apocalypse is quoted by him, and, contrary to his usual method, he names the apostle John as the author, a fact which has gone far to satisfy very sceptical critics of the authenticity, and leaving no doubt on the minds of any critics of that marvellous book as to its early and universal reception. St. Paul he does not name or quote frequently. Doubtless he may have done this in the lost work, where such refer-

* I may refer to my note at the end of St. Mark's gospel in the *Speaker's Commentary*. It was written after this sermon was preached.

ence would be called for, as it was not in arguing with Jew or Gentile; but Thoma, the writer to whom I have already alluded, has shown that Justin was familiar with the teaching of St. Paul, and that he gives its substance in unmistakable language, a point of less importance in regard to the epistles than as illustrating his method of dealing with doctrinal writings, especially with the gospel and epistles of St. John. No one has ever questioned that of all early writers in the Christian Church Justin was the first who brought out the doctrine of the Divine Logos in its fulness of significance. His whole mind is penetrated with the thought. He found in it a key to the utterances of the prophets, to all intimations of the personal intervention and manifestations of the Godhead. In the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world Justin discerned the secret of the recognition of eternal truths by deep-hearted men, who, long before the coming of the Saviour, surrendered themselves to the guidance of an indwelling spirit, bearing witness to the fundamental principles of all religion. Taking a position far above that which for ages obscured, while it professed to explain, the relations between Gentile, Jewish, and Christian thought, attributing them to external contact, to conscious or unconscious appropriation of alien principles, Justin Martyr maintained that all truth proceeds from one living eternal source, the Word which was in God, which was with God, which was essentially one with God, the very going forth and personal manifestation of the Deity. Light of light, very God of very God, are

terms which, if not expressly used by him, do exactly and completely represent his view of the relation of the Word, the eternal Son, to the eternal Father. It has been well observed that religion presents itself under two grand aspects to the spirits which most perfectly represent the mind of the Church, under the aspect of redemption from sin to the earnest, heart-searching, struggling Christian, under the aspect of objective truth, a manifestation of the Divine personalities, to the contemplative spirit, the one finding in St. Paul, the other in St. John, its highest exemplification: not, be it observed, that these tendencies are opposed, not that they do not co-exist and mutually support each other, but that in one or other Divine they are severally more fully developed. Justin Martyr represents that vast portion of Christendom which yielded itself most completely to the guidance of St. John. In fact the intimate connection between Justin and St. John is not disputed; the question with critics who disregard Christian tradition has been simply which of the two derived the doctrine from the other, or whether both proceeded from a common source; viz., from the Alexandrian school, represented by Philo. The latter solution found for a time many advocates; but no doubt now remains that the speculations of Philo, bearing externally a strong resemblance to certain points in Justin, rest on principles essentially distinct and antagonistic. It is now admitted that either the writer of the fourth gospel or Justin must have had the other before him. Here I will ask you to notice this unquestioned fact: while all statements of Justin assume

the principles set forth succinctly in the first verses of St. John's Gospel, they enlarge very considerably upon them. They are manifestly either true developments, evolved by a natural process of the Christian consciousness, or they are expansions and applications suggested by the conflict with heathenism, or it may be in part by the unconscious working of a mind deeply impressed by the grandeur of Platonic speculation. I will only add this: after a most careful and exhaustive examination of every passage in Justin which deals with this subject, the writer in Hilgenfeld's *Review*, to whom I have already alluded, concludes, nay, I will confidently say, proves, that it is impossible one should not have been derived from the other; and again, that it is equally impossible that the developments and expansions of Justin should not have been posterior in time to the general reception of the fourth gospel, thus giving evidence of the existence and wide diffusion of that gospel within little more than half a century from what must have been the date of its composition.

I trust that the importance of these results will justify the extent of my remarks; and well satisfied shall I be if they induce any to look deeply into the question, or guard any against hasty admission of assertions and speculations rife in this age of controversy; but I regret that I am hereby compelled to speak less fully than I had wished upon the account which Justin gives of the crowning rite of the Christian Church—the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. His immediate object is to remove certain heathen misconceptions, but his statement is singularly instructive to Christian

inquirers. It tells us what the Christians did, what the Christians believed; it condemns alike the excesses and the shortcomings which in later ages, and specially in this age, have seriously obscured the significance and blessings of that sacrament. Towards the end of the first *Apology* Justin gives in consecutive chapters two accounts of the celebration of Holy Communion, of the Eucharist, as he formally designates it. The first account refers to the administration of the sacrament immediately after baptism in the case of all adults, as we may infer from the conditions; thus proving, were proof needed, that the reception of both sacraments was an indispensable condition to membership with the Christian Church. No person was baptized, being of age to understand and accept his responsibilities, save on conditions which equally entitled him to participate in the Eucharist—a participation which no baptized Christian ever dreamed that he had the option of declining. The second account refers to the ordinary and regular administration of the Eucharist. Questions, as you know, are raised as to the frequency of such administration. The practice varied in different branches of the Church, as we know for instance from the epistle of St. Augustine to Januarius, but on one point there was no difference. From East to West, under all circumstances, all Christians, all who claimed to be members of the Church and were recognized as such, attended weekly Communion. The conditions are briefly stated by Justin: "And this food among us is called 'Eucharist,' of which none may partake but one who believes that what we teach is true, who has been washed by the laver

for the remission of sins and for regeneration, and who lives as Christ has enjoined."

The practice he states thus: "And on the day which is called Sunday (ἡλίου ἡμέρα) there is a gathering together of all who are in cities or in the country"—a fact of deepest interest, considering the circumstances. With a certainty that such gathering would excite and direct their persecutors, all, without exception, all who could attend met thus every week under penalty of self-executed excommunication. Now I doubt not that in this, as in all points of outward observance, every Christian Church has full authority to determine the times and forms of reception; but every member of each church is bound to obey that authority. Judge for yourselves whether our Church does or does not recognize the principles set forth by Justin Martyr. Judge for yourselves whether and to what extent her injunctions are complied with. The present age has witnessed a great and increasing improvement in attendance; let us see to it, each for himself, that such improvement be in his own case exemplified.

From the occasion pass to the observance. With two exceptions of secondary importance it coincided with our present Anglican usage. Then, as now, the writings of the prophets—that is, lessons from the Old Testament, and from the so-called ἀπομνημονεύματα of the apostles, which in this passage Justin calls the gospels (τὰ εὐαγγέλια)—were read; not scanty portions, but sufficient to inform the minds of the hearers, and keep them fully conversant with scriptural teaching: "so far as time allows on each occasion" (μέχρις ἐγχωρεῖ) is

Justin's word. The reading was followed by an address from the President (ὁ προεστώς), in whom we recognize the Bishop or the celebrant Priest. We have here the place for the sermon marked; and the topics are briefly pointed out—admonition, and specially exhortations to follow the great examples set forth in Holy Scripture. Then comes a break. The second part of the service—to which none were admitted not being in full communion, from which none who were in communion ever absented themselves—commenced with offerings of prayer and praise, such prayers being offered by all, common prayers, a special characteristic of Anglican worship. Then were brought to the celebrant Priest bread and wine and water, on which let me say one word. The custom of the early Church as to mingling water with the wine, so far as we can judge from every extant document, was general; but not being expressly ordered by Scripture, its observance is clearly within the control of every national church. As true children we implicitly obey the express directions of our own Church; but in controversy with any who would desire that the direction were different we should be careful not to go beyond the truth. I should certainly blame no man who wished for a change, though I am entirely content to abide by a decision for which good reasons may be alleged, and which has the concurrence of other churches of Western Christendom. Even the Church of Rome, in its authoritative catechism, says expressly that the omission of water does not affect the validity of the sacrament.

The elements were then consecrated by an eucharistic prayer offered with all earnestness (ὅση δύναμις αὐτῷ)

by the celebrant, a prayer of which the form in our own liturgy is authoritatively fixed in the prayer for consecration, the response of the whole people following, ὁ λαὸς ἐπευφημεῖ λέγων Ἀμήν. Then came the administration to all present. But afterwards a second difference of practice is noticeable. The consecrated elements being now regarded, as Justin is careful to state, not as common food, but as being the very body and blood of Jesus (Ἰησοῦ καὶ σάρκα καὶ αἷμα ἐδιδάχθημεν εἶναι), were sent to the absent, a rule absolutely needful in those times, when numbers were in prison or in the mines, where no celebration of the Eucharist could be held—numbers who but for that gracious act enjoined by the Church would have languished for want of what to them was no mere ceremonial form, but a true participation of all blessings purchased by the death of Christ, and communicated to the faithful by the sacramental body and blood. Here you will observe that there is no question of reservation, no putting aside for future use—a practice which crept in afterwards; no presentation of the consecrated elements for the contemplation of Christians—such presentation was utterly unknown to any ancient Church; but an act immediately following the public communion. Whether a similar act is authorized by the laws of our Church, as one of our most learned and judicious prelates has lately maintained, is a question for serious consideration; but it would evidently be in many cases expedient, if permissible, especially in the case of the sick and dying, under circumstances which often make such formal celebration as our Church enjoins difficult, if not

impracticable. When argued, I trust that the question will be discussed in a spirit of candour and charity, and that, whatever may be decided, there may be hearty and willing acquiescence in the ascertained law of the Church.

Let us now address ourselves with all earnestness of heart to that sacramental service in which we are called to participate. Let those who for any cause are not prepared to communicate take to heart the lessons taught in every age by the Church of their Redeemer; let His command, His invitation, be heard in their innermost consciousness, constraining them to lay aside every weight that burdens their conscience, to eschew every evil habit that keeps them aloof from Christ; and let those who do come, draw near with one thought, one feeling, one hope, that of yielding their whole heart to Him Who, ever present in His Church, here makes His presence realized and felt, and gives Himself to be the sustenance of our spirits, the preserver of body and soul unto everlasting life.

## SERMON XXIII.

### Justin Martyr—Witness to the Eucharistic Doctrine.

"Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body."—Matt. xxvi. 26.

In the course of last term I attempted to give some account of one of the first and greatest martyrs, and of the testimony which his writings bear to the faith and institutions of the Church in the age immediately following that of its complete establishment by the apostles. No point is more deeply interesting than that which concerns the belief and practice of Christians with regard to the Eucharistic Sacrament, to which Justin Martyr frequently refers, of which he twice describes the mode of administration, and explains the deep significance. Upon the last, assuredly not the least important, part of the subject I was unable at the time to dwell with requisite fulness, and I will now endeavour to supply the defect, so far as may be practicable within the ordinary limits of a morning's address.

I must first call attention to the special object of Justin in introducing a subject so mysterious and sacred in an *Apology* addressed to heathens, or in

referring to it more than once in a discussion with an unconverted Hebrew. It was in the former case needful and right to remove certain prepossessions, and to dispose of serious scandals prevalent among all classes of the Gentiles. He had shown in the former part of his *Apology* that the moral teaching of the Saviour accorded with and transcended the loftiest standard set up by those whom the emperors and senate recognized as the wisest and best of men. He has now to show that the central rite, the one supreme ordinance observed by all baptized Christians, harmonized with that teaching; and he has also to give an explanation which would at once account for and answer the charge that their common banquet was stained with the deadliest and most loathsome crime.* Justin therefore is careful to say nothing in which it was not certain that all Christians were agreed, to describe no rites which were not universally practised, to state no doctrines which were not universally received. There is a total absence of the controversial element. Indeed it is remarkable, considering the sharpness and fierceness of controversies in latter ages, that neither in the second century, nor in any century previous to the disruption of the Eastern and Western churches, did

* It is certain that the infamous charges which are here alluded to were brought against the Christians by men of high station about the time when Justin Martyr presented his *Apology*. M. Aubé has shown that they were in all probability urged, but certainly not in good faith, by Cornelius Fronto, the teacher of Marcus Aurelius. After this time no heathen writer of any character adopts or alludes to them. The *Apology* of Justin Martyr appears to have so far effected its special object. (See *La Polémique Païenne à la Fin du 11e Siècle*. B. Aube, p. 78, and specially p. 95.)

any angry or indeed any serious disputes arise in relation to this subject. It is true that different tendencies were developed soon after the age of Justin. The great fathers who were trained in the Alexandrian school, chiefly influenced by its learned, thoughtful, but very speculative leaders, Clement and Origen, dwelt so exclusively upon the spiritual aspect of the sacrament, especially upon the living presence of the Logos, as to lose sight of points to which attention was more especially directed by such writers as Gregory of Nyssa, Chrysostom, and a long line of theologians distinguished for devout and practical application of sacred truth. But those tendencies did not affect the central principles, and did not cause any disturbance in the Church. All felt how far beyond the limits of natural reason were the innermost truths symbolized or presented in the Eucharist; how various were the aspects under which the sacrament might be contemplated; and all felt equally that what was received by devout communicants was the very central and unquestioned principle, the pledge and assurance of union with Christ. But certainly for us it is most satisfactory to have the practice and the doctrines set before us just in that form in which the earliest Christians received them, free from all speculation, touching on no controversy, and with singular completeness in the writings of a man accepted in all ages and in all communities of Christendom as a representative of primitive Christian thought. Nor will it be uninteresting to find that those statements, which may strike some among us as peculiarly strong, are supported by passages, substantially the same in import,

in the great work of Irenæus, the younger contemporary of Justin, who, like him, had a singularly extensive acquaintance with the leading spirits of the Church; and who, like him, had received the truth from the immediate followers of the apostles of Jesus Christ. When we have their teaching before us, we may profitably compare it with that of our own Church, and thus bring our spirits into a fit state for participation in the holiest and most solemn of all her rites.

The mode of celebration was considered in a former discourse, but must be briefly stated. On the first day of every week all Christians assembled for the special purpose of communion, absence not being contemplated as a thing conceivable. When assembled, after reading of Scripture, common prayer, and psalmody, corresponding in substance to our own service, bread and a chalice of wine with water were brought (the word denotes a solemn oblation, but here and always in the primitive Church it is applied to the elements before consecration) to the celebrant, the Bishop when present. Praise and adoration were then offered by the celebrant to the Father in the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, followed by the prayer of consecration, corresponding to that in our Communion service. That prayer was offered by the celebrant as the representative of the whole congregation, who signify their assent and participation in the act by a loud Amen—a point, be it noted, of extreme importance, vindicating for the laity their own share in the rite. And here let me observe that the prayers and thanksgivings and the solemn words of institution are represented by Justin and

by Irenæus as sacrificial acts, the only sacrifices offered by Christians, taking the place of all the ceremonial forms connected with the sacrifices of the Jewish Church. The term sacrifice is not applied by Justin Martyr or by any early Father to the oblations either before or after consecration—although the whole Eucharistic service commemorates and sacramentally represents the one true and perfect sacrifice of the Redeemer—but, as in our Liturgy, the term is applied to the self-oblation of believers expressed in devout words and aspirations of loving hearts. And now the question arises—one which to Justin and his contemporaries seemed clear and easy, one which to us may seem fraught with difficulty—What were the elements after consecration? what were they in significance, in use, in substance? what were they in themselves? what were they to the recipients?

Here is the statement of Justin in the sixty-sixth chapter of the first *Apology*—"This food is called with us Eucharistia;" as we should say, the Eucharist; an expression, as you will observe, properly applying to the sacramental act of consecration, but in Justin's time used idiomatically to denote the consecrated elements. Of this food none could partake save on the conditions of sound faith, baptismal regeneration, and a holy life, conditions which at once exclude the supposition that any change in the elements, independent of the recipient's state, had been accomplished. Justin adds, "For we do not receive this as common bread, or as common drink, but in the same manner as by God's word Jesus Christ our Saviour, being made incarnate,

had both flesh and blood for our salvation; thus also we have been taught (that is, we have received as the teaching of the apostles) that the food when blessed (that is, now become eucharistic) by the word of prayer derived from Him, that food by which our blood and flesh in the process of assimilation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus Who became incarnate." Now that these expressions are exceedingly mysterious, that if not in Justin's time, yet certainly in our time, they are open to misconception and misinterpretation, is obvious, and we shall do well to consider them in detail, remembering always that Justin's intention is simply to express in words which his hearers might understand the real and exact purport of the apostolic doctrine, since he goes on to say, "For the Apostles in their records (*ἀπομνημονεύμασιν*) which are called gospels, related that it was thus enjoined to them, that Jesus having taken bread and blessed it, said, Do this in remembrance of me; this is my body: and likewise having taken the cup He said, This is my blood." No meaning not necessarily contained in those words was contemplated by Justin.

This you should first observe. No physical, no material change in the nature or use of the elements is thought of. *The food after consecration is represented as nourishing our flesh and blood.* This point is not open to question. It comes out with even greater distinctness in the corresponding passage of Irenæus. There is no question of the transformation of the elements—a doctrine unhappily maintained by the later Greek Church; or of the substitution of a different body, that

body which abides in heaven—the unscriptural and novel doctrine of the Roman Church; the food is received into our natural organization. Still in a high and true sense it is different; for it is accompanied by, to the believer's spirit inseparably associated with, the living Word. Christ's word made it what it is, in purport, in significance, in efficacy, His own body, His own blood; a symbol, but more than a symbol, a representation and effectual conveyance of that which it represents. The Christian when he receives the consecrated elements has present to his mind the consecrating word; that word is Christ's word; it is the Divine Word speaking to his spirit; the word and the food reach him at the same moment; he cannot dissociate them; by the Word his spirit is brought into union with Christ's divinity; by the food he becomes mystically, virtually partaker of His humanity. Christ thus gives Himself in His totality to the thoroughly faithful recipient. And inasmuch as the food thus consecrated is in purport and effect the body and blood of Christ, as all the early fathers believed and expressly taught, it brings with it the certainty of a blessed immortality, a statement adopted in our *Book of Homilies.* Let me ask you to consider well this statement of Irenæus: "We offer to God that which is His own, with peculiar congruity (ἐμμελῶς) proclaiming the unity of body and spirit; for as the bread taken from the earth when it receives the consecrating invocation of God is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist"—you will observe the exact correspondence with Justin Martyr—"consisting of two things, earthly and heavenly, so too our bodies, having

received the Eucharist, are no longer subject to mortality, having the hope of the resurrection." The material food remains after consecration just what it was before, it is still earthly; but it has with it the heavenly word of power, the present Word of God, and as the Eucharist it represents the Person of Christ, in which the human nature remains unchanged, though inseparably united with the Divine nature of the Word.

I am fully aware how difficult it is in considering such statements to divest our minds of associations which overshadow their meaning, introducing alien thoughts, or prejudicing us strongly against what seems to be their import. I can also understand, not without sympathy, the feelings of those who, wearied by unprofitable subtleties, are tempted to discard all inquiries into conflicting interpretations; but, after all, it is necessary to have some clear notion of what our Church means in using words so unspeakably solemn as those which it draws from the Book of Life, from that portion of it which contains the very centre of its doctrinal and spiritual teaching. Surely it is well to fix our minds in the first place upon the exposition, not to call it the explanation, proposed by the earliest, and, as all admit, the universally recognized, teachers of Christendom. In their writings you will find no trace of doctrines repugnant to the minds of those who are trained in the study of Holy Scripture and in the school of our own greatest divines; no suggestion of the repetition of a sacrifice offered once for all upon the cross of our Redeemer; no notion of a change of substance, or of the substitution of the actual personal

body of the Redeemer for the material elements; no confusion of the spiritual principle with the external form, closely as form and substance are connected, even as in our humanity, or as in the highest sense in the personality of Christ. But what you will find, and I trust rejoice to find, is an intense feeling of the worth, dignity, significance, and efficacy of that sacrament which Christ instituted on the night preceding His death on the cross, and which He left to His Church to be received as a pledge of His perpetual presence, and to be observed as an ordinance of universal obligation by all who call themselves by His name.

And now let me request your earnest attention to the very remarkable agreement of the doctrines which I have shown to be maintained by the earliest teachers of Christianity with those of our own Church. In many points, as might be expected, our services correspond very closely with those of other communities which have retained aught of the primitive forms of eucharistic service. The representation of an accomplished sacrifice, the setting forth of the spiritual benefits of communion with God, the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, present, as none doubt, throughout the celebration to the hearts and consciences of believers, the forms of consecration and of distribution—occupy with us their high and rightful place; but in every portion of our service there recur expressions—warmer and fuller are not found in any other modern liturgies—expressions which show how thoroughly the teaching of Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and I may add, of all the best and earliest fathers of the Christian Church has been appro-

priated by those to whom we are indebted for the compilation and also for the reformation of our own eucharistic forms.

I speak specially of the efficacy attached to the consecrated elements, the recognition of the presence and power of the Divine Word acting through them and in them upon the whole being, spirit, and body, of Christians. First, in the solemn warning, substituted for such disciplinarian law as might seem needful were it practicable, excluding impenitent sinners, we read, "Then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink His blood; then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us"—words of which the deep meaning is strikingly illustrated by the contrast: "not considering the Lord's body," that is, treating the Eucharist as common food, not recognizing in it the effectual representation of Christ's body, we receive instead of a blessing a condemnation; we are guilty, that is, liable to punishment, as profaning His body and blood; so that, instead of having therein a pledge of the resurrection of which Irenæus speaks, we should receive a foretaste of mortality, an anticipation of the death to which, save for Christ's gift, we are naturally doomed. Consider again the prayer immediately before consecration—"Grant us, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink His blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body"—an expression which derives a full light from the words of the Fathers, which tell us that His body is sacramentally received in the Eucharist—in bread, and our souls

washed by His most precious blood, represented and, as early Protestant divines express it, exhibited, held out, presented, in the consecrated wine. Look again at the consecration prayer, "That we receiving these thy creatures of bread and wine" (precisely as Irenæus and Justin teach, unchanged in physical properties, but made vehicles of spiritual gifts) "may be partakers of His most blessed body and blood." Hence we learn the full force of the words with which our Church connects the act of individual administration: "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life," the last words being repeated at the delivery of the cup. Sanctification of the Spirit, the one condition of all blessings, is thus in our services, as in the institution of Christ and in the teaching of the primitive Church, inseparably associated with the gift of eternal life, the life of the soul, the life of the body, sustained here by God's natural gifts, and in the case of sincere believers, prepared by communion with our Lord's own humanity for everlasting life.

In conclusion, let me deal briefly with one question which, after all that has been said, doubtless rises, exciting doubts, or anxiety, or misgiving in many minds. Is it necessary, is it expedient, is it possible to keep our minds clear of confusion on points which certainly have given occasion to differences so serious among Christians? The answer is, that in proportion to his mental power each man is bound to ascertain the teaching of the Scriptures, which he accepts as the source of all revealed truth, on all cardinal doctrines; and again,

that in order to ascertain what it does teach, he cannot choose but inquire in what sense it was received by those who best represent the mind of the Church informed by the Spirit of God; but that having the main truths, those on which the best men agree, which our own Church distinctly teaches, present to our minds, we shall do well to avoid discussions, which are only profitable when followed out earnestly and thoroughly, and with a single eye to the defence and maintenance of the faith. Every man who receives humbly, gratefully, with the assurance that what Christ has promised in this, as in every gracious act and word, He will perform to the utmost, is a fit and worthy recipient. Each of us will receive in proportion to the measure, not of our knowledge, but of our love. Many may come to the holy table with most inadequate conceptions of what it signifies; many with views and notions derived from secondary and incorrect sources; indeed, speaking frankly, I doubt whether in the wide extent of Christendom there is now a man who does not bring with him into that presence some thoughts and opinions either derogatory to the majesty of the sacrament, or inconsistent with its real significance. But whosoever comes conscious of his own weakness, conscious of his own sinfulness, and trusting wholly in the Saviour's love and power, will go away, if not with clearer views, yet with a clearer heart, with a deeper sense of eternal love, with that within him which in this life will keep him daily more free from the bondage of sin, and will prepare him, by a progressive growth in holiness, for the resurrection unto eternal life.

## SERMON XXIV.

### St. Athanasius—Witness to the Permanency of Eucharistic Doctrine.

"The bread of God is He Which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."—John vi. 33.

On a former occasion I endeavoured briefly to set before you the doctrine of the primitive Church concerning the sacrament of Holy Communion, as it is distinctly and completely expounded in the earliest writings of the Fathers. I then took Justin Martyr as the principal exponent of Church doctrine. It appears to me that it may be interesting and profitable to inquire how far that doctrine can be proved to have remained the same in substance, if differing at all differing only in expansion and spiritual application, during the two hundred years which elapsed before the recognition of Christianity by the Empire, and its virtual establishment as the religion of the State.

The special importance of all notices of doctrine during that period is fully recognized by inquirers of every school of thought. All feel that we have there the free workings of the Christian mind, stimulated and developed by internal and external conflicts, but com-

pletely independent of secular influences, to which some critics are wont to refer as modifying or perverting the teaching of the Church. One point of the highest importance I would have you bear in mind throughout this discussion. During all that time, and indeed during some five or six centuries afterwards, there was no controversy among Christians touching the usage, the meaning, the spiritual efficacy of the Eucharistic sacrament. The various and manifold aspects of the truth were set forth with more or less power by the great teachers of Eastern and Western Christendom, by none more impressively than by the heads of the catechetical school of Alexandria; but none of them impugned, all of them accepted, the statements proposed by their predecessors and contemporaries within the precincts of the great Catholic Church, then externally as well as spiritually one. For this and other obvious reasons I will at present take the man universally recognized as the truest and ablest representative of the Church at the close of that period, as the most authoritative exponent of its doctrine—Athanasius the Great, entitled to that designation, if ever any one was entitled to it, by the gifts and graces which qualify a man to be the leader and teacher of his fellow-men.

But before I bring under your notice the chief passages which refer to the doctrine in question, it may be well to say a few words touching his position and character, which have been sometimes wilfully, often ignorantly, misrepresented. Athanasius was no bigot; he was the very reverse of a bigot. The truths which he held, as our Church, as every branch of the believing

Church holds them, to be essential, belonging to the eternal foundations of all faith, he held firmly without compromise. In their defence he confronted imperial despotism, dared every form of persecution, underwent for half a century the severest labours, privations, and sufferings, and won for himself a foremost place among those in whom the human spirit recognizes embodiments of its highest energies and aspirations. But Athanasius was trained in a school above all remarkable for its free and frank recognition of everything true and good, even in those systems which it rejected as substantially false and destructive. His earliest work against the Gentiles teems with kindly and generous suggestions. In this, and indeed in all his works, he keeps aloof from very dangerous tendencies which careful readers of Clement and Origen deplore, which indeed for the most part were exaggerated, as usual, by their wrongheaded followers; but he went much farther than the generality of later divines in adopting all large and liberal views which are reconcilable with a genuine faith in the Saviour. In all his works I do not remember to have found, I do not believe there is to be found, one word in condemnation of tenets since regarded as questionable which were maintained by either of those two great men, certainly most liberal expositors of Christian truth. Again, in dealing with Christians who, though quite sound in the faith, felt much difficulty in accepting the definitions which he had himself adopted and retained, he gave his decided sanction* to the course pursued by St. Basil and St. Gregory Nazianzen,

* See a fine passage *De Synod. Ar. et Sel.* p. 915 D.

and opposed the stern advocates of suppression or expulsion. Athanasius belongs, not as is often assumed, to the extreme, but to the liberal and moderate party, which from first to last maintained Catholic doctrine with energy and firmness, but, as Neander, a most competent authority on such a point, has shown,* with a studious abstinence from harshness and intolerance. All of course see in Athanasius the brave combatant, the ardent controversialist, the uncompromising enemy of falsehood and misbelief; but those who are most familiarly acquainted with his writings know also how thoroughly his spirit was penetrated with what St. Basil (*Ep.* lxvi. 2) calls "his evangelical sympathy," that which is the distinctive characteristic of the Lord to Whom he devoted his life, by Whom he was sustained unto death. In these points there is much resemblance between Justin Martyr and Athanasius. In their early training, in their natural predilections, in their lofty unselfishness—Athanasius most conspicuously in the manifold developments of intellectual and spiritual power—both stand out as representatives not only of the greatness and steadfastness, but of the candid and generous spirit, of the early Church.

We may now consider the statements found in St. Athanasius touching the nature, meaning, and effects of the Holy Eucharist. You have however first to notice one fact which seems to be overlooked by some writers to whom we are indebted for very valuable notices of the teaching of this great master. Athanasius does not in any passage deal directly and specifically with the

* Vol. iv. pp. 92–96. Clark's translation.

doctrine. He has much to say of it incidentally; he uses it by way of illustration, in enforcing other Christian truths, in demolishing unchristian errors; but in this respect he has no occasion, unlike Justin Martyr, to describe the practice of Christian worshippers, or to explain the truths which had given occasion to gross misrepresentations among the heathen. It was not in fact necessary at that time for Athanasius to expound to his Christian readers, or to set forth for the instruction of unbelievers, a doctrine about which, as I said, no controversy was then raised, which all accepted and realized in exact proportion to their state of spiritual development. Athanasius is, perhaps, among all controversalists the one who keeps most closely to the subject which he has at any time in hand. He has in each treatise one great truth to uphold, and touches on other points very rarely, never indeed, save so far as they bear upon his main argument. It is, I think, for this reason that many readers find the works of Athanasius, which are really remarkable for grace and dignity of language, as well as for cogency and persuasiveness, somewhat monotonous, and devoid of interest apart from the great Arian controversy, with which few save theologians care to be thoroughly conversant. But this does not detract from the force of what he does say when the occasion arises. On the contrary, as we all know, an *obiter dictum* coming from a competent authority, on a subject with which he is specially familiar, has for some purposes a peculiar force. It does not create suspicion, it is free from controversial intention, and it is accepted, so far as it goes, without

hesitation or reluctance. Only we must be careful to remember that though, so far as it goes, such a dictum is to be accepted, it does not extend and must not be applied to points not necessarily or naturally within the scope of the teacher. We must say, since Athanasius says so much, what he says was the doctrine of the Church in his day. We must *not* say, because he does not allude to this or that point, he knew nothing of it, it was a doctrine not held in his day; a mode of arguing, be it observed in passing, very common in the writings of German critics, and adopted by one of the ablest* in dealing with the teaching of Athanasius the Great touching the Eucharistic sacrament. On the contrary we have a right to affirm that all that Athanasius found accepted by the Church he maintained, fully aware that it was present to the mind of his readers, fully assured that it was the truth "delivered once for all to the saints."

Now in the writings of Athanasius which until very lately were known to scholars, there is but one considerable passage which expressly refers to this sacrament. I shall have occasion to discuss it; at present it may suffice to say that it deals exclusively with the spiritual bearings of sacramental doctrine. It occurs towards the close of the 4th epistle to Serapion, at the end of a lengthened discussion on the usage of Scripture in speaking of the Holy Spirit. But a late discovery, one of the most important discoveries of the present age in its bearings upon early Ecclesiastical history and doctrine, has thrown great

* Steiz.

and unexpected light upon this subject. The Festal Letters of Athanasius—unfortunately not in the original Greek, but in a Syriac translation, which though inelegant in form is unquestionably correct in substance—were found in 1847 in a very ancient convent of Nitria in Egypt, not far from Alexandria, and after many curious misadventures they were brought at different times, and in disjointed fragments, to the British Museum. There they were arranged, and afterwards published, by the late Canon Cureton, to whose learning, ingenuity, and sound judgment we are indebted for the first notice and just appreciation of their value. His account of the whole matter, which is full of interest, should be in the hands of all students of Church history. Two translations have since appeared, one in German, by Larsowe, 1852, with a good introduction; another in Latin, under the care of Cardinal Mai, reprinted in Migne's edition of Athanasius. There is also an Oxford translation, which I have not yet consulted. The very special importance of these epistles in reference to our subject will be at once perceived, when we remember that they were formal communications to all Christian churches fixing the date of the Paschal Festival every year; that they were prepared by the Patriarch of Alexandria at the request of the other Patriarchs, especially of the Patriarch of the West; that they extend over some forty-six years, the whole episcopate of Athanasius; that they were written by him under a great variety of circumstances; and, above all, that they contain repeated exhortations touching the Paschal Festival, as having for its central and charac-

teristic observance a most solemn celebration of the Holy Eucharist. We have, in fact, in these epistles, not, as I before said, any direct account of that sacrament, of its meaning, or its ritual forms, but clear and full indications of the spirit in which Athanasius himself regarded, and knew that all his faithful hearers regarded, its uses, its principles, and its bearings. To some passages which bring out these points most fully I will now call your attention, premising only in one word, that the truth which to the mind of this great teacher involves all other truths conveyed and represented in this sacrament, is that which is set forth in the text I have chosen, as one most deeply impressed upon the heart of Athanasius, "The bread of God is He Which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world."

There is one passage from the 4th Paschal epistle which at once presents distinctly the central thought, that which pervades the whole series:* "We must come to such a festival clean from all pollution, clothing our spirits with pure vestments, for therein we put on the Lord Jesus; that is our duty; thereby we can celebrate the true Easter with Him. But we put Him on if we love goodness, and eschew vice; if we live in temperance and keep clear of licentiousness; if we avoid all unrighteousness, are firm in all good principles, remember the poor, cultivate humility, and above all hate all pride of heart. Even Israel of old, though fighting, so to speak, under a dark cloud, was thus partaker of the passover; though as

* Larsowe, pp. 78, 79.

yet the truth was foreshadowed only in typical rites. But we, my beloved, keep the feast, now that the shadow has passed away and the type has been fulfilled, no longer as an outward and symbolical form; nor, like the Jews, do we resort to an earthly Jerusalem in order to sacrifice the Paschal lamb, but according to apostolical injunctions we rise above all mere outwardness, and sing the new spiritual song of praise and thanksgiving.* For when the apostles received His teaching, being, so to speak, in the very presence of Incarnate Truth, they came to the Saviour, and said, 'Where wilt Thou that we prepare for Thee the Paschal Lamb?' Then first they learned that the feast must be kept under the new dispensation, not, as of old, in the visible Jerusalem, but wheresoever God should will it. But His will was that it should be kept everywhere, in all places, that in every land incense and sacrifice (both spiritual) should be offered to Him. Then learned they that, as the glad tidings of the gospel should be spread abroad through all the world, so too must there be a corresponding extension of the great Paschal feast; hence their question, Where shall we eat the Passover? And here our Saviour, leading their thoughts away from the outward and typical symbol to the true spiritual feast, admonishes them that they have no longer to eat the flesh of the Paschal lamb, but His own flesh, thus speaking, 'Take, eat, and drink, this is My flesh and My blood.'" So far we see very clearly the general tendency of the thoughts of Athanasius. He attaches himself wholly to the spiritual, the higher moral signi-

* Compare Justin M. c. *Tryph.* § 117.

ficance of all outward forms, at the same time making all true life consist in the reception of the Saviour's personality. This he presses in every epistle; he repeats it in every form; all the words which bear upon it in St. Paul, in the Evangelists, and most especially in St. John, are ever on his lips; he is never weary of iterating the statements that Christ is the bread of life, the bread which came down from heaven, the manna which alone gives sustenance to our nature and assures its immortality, that His Body is the strengthener, His Blood the purifier of our whole being, of that essential personality of redeemed man, which will rise transfigured into His perfect likeness at the general resurrection from the dead.

But you will ask, In what sense does Athanasius use these terms, "flesh and blood of Christ"? To this I will answer, first, that neither he, nor any ante-Nicene Father, nay, I will add, nor any teacher of the Church before Paschasius Radbertus, in the ninth century,* dreamed of any substantial change in the elements which by Christ's appointment became the sacrament of His body and blood. On this point no discussion had ever been raised; when at length it was raised, it soon gave occasion to speculations and controversies which have for the last eight or nine centuries brought incalculable evils upon the Church. They have been one main cause both of the terrible disruption between East and West, and between the antagonistic fractions of the Western Church, and they are a permanent cause of their continued alienation. No early Father ever

* The Treatise *De Corpor.*, &c., was written A.D. 832.

supposed either that the Lord's very body and blood were, so to speak, changed into the elements, or that, to use Radbert's language, the elements became substantially transmuted* into what they represented. But there were two aspects under which the central truth, upheld by all the great ante-Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers, was contemplated. Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and the great majority of orthodox Christians in the East and West, directed special attention to the effects of sacramental contact with our Lord's humanity upon our whole complex nature, body as well as spirit, assuring its renewal and its perpetuity, being a certain pledge and effectual cause of its resurrection. That is, in fact, the view which stands out prominently in our Communion service, the doctrine which is formally declared in the solemn words uttered by the ministrant in the act of distributing both elements.

The great teachers of the Alexandrian church, without at all controverting this position, dwelt far more frequently and earnestly upon the other aspect, that which regards the effects of the contact of our Lord's divinity upon the spiritual and moral nature of faithful recipients. Such especially is the tendency of Clement, Origen, Didymus, and all the predecessors of Athanasius; such in a most remarkable degree is the tendency of Athanasius himself. In nine passages out of ten he urges it almost exclusively. Take this for instance, from the 3rd Paschal letter: "The old Passover was kept when the Jews fed on the flesh of the senseless lamb, when sprinkling its blood on the lintel they

* See Paschasius Radbertus, *Epist. ad Fedegard.*

averted the destroyer. But now we feed on the Word (Λόγος) of the Father, and sprinkle the lintel of our hearts with the blood of the New Testament; we proclaim, and are partakers of, the grace of the Redeemer." And again from the 7th epistle: "God is the God not of the dead but of the living. He quickens by His living Word (the Logos of St. John), He gives us food and life, even as He our Lord saith, 'I am the Bread of Life.'" And again, "In that He was life, He died that He might give us life; in that He was the Word, He became flesh, that by His uttered word He might teach those who are in the flesh. In that He is the spring of life, He will quench our thirst, calling us to the true spiritual Passover with the gracious words, He who thirsteth let him come unto Me and drink." And to remove all doubt as to the spiritual moral bearing of these and similar intimations, Athanasius writes thus in the 6th epistle: "We eat the true Passover, *i.e.* the Easter feast, and specially the Holy Communion, as it was instituted by Christ, when we inwardly realize the principle of the feast, when we discern our Deliverer, and yield ourselves wholly to His gracious influence:" "all thoughts of goodness, righteousness, temperance, and steadfast adherence to truth, thoughts which come to us by and in the Word, are the true nourishment of the soul, nay, our Lord Himself saith, feeding His soul, so to speak, with His own Divine self, My food is this, that I do the will of My Father in heaven." Such to Athanasius is the supreme object and effect of the contact of the Logos with the soul, not merely represented, but certified and realized to

faithful recipients in Holy Communion; such too is his interpretation—an interpretation which was, I may say, universally received by the early Church—of the petition for daily bread, that is, either as held by Origen (deriving ἐπιούσιος from ἐπὶ and οὐσία) 'spiritual' bread, or as by Athanasius, closely adhering to the more probable etymology (from ἐπίουσα), bread 'appertaining to the future life,' the morrow of eternity, nourishing the soul by thoughts and principles which alone ensure its participation in the blessings of eternal life.

All these passages, and they are but samples of the teaching in these epistles, set forth varied aspects of the great doctrine which is very distinctly inculcated in that part of the 4th epistle to Serapion, to which I referred before as being previously known, and which had given occasion to much controversy. It would take more time, and far more research into the meaning of each clause, than would be suitable for a morning discourse, to deal with that controversy; but the result may be briefly and, I hope, clearly stated. The eternal Logos, present everywhere and at all times, as giver of life to the faithful, conveys that life in its fullest sense to their whole being in Holy Communion. He is present as God-man, present in His true personality, bearing with Him, not that material body which abides in heaven, circumscribed in time and space, but all that it, being glorified, possesses and communicates of saving, healing, sanctifying influences. In another passage,* unreasonably suspected by those who will not admit

* See tom. ii. p. 1325, ed. Migne. I have given the general sense of this fragment. See Mai's note *in loc.*

the view which it presents, we find a statement which implies that when the words of consecration are uttered, the elements become sacramentally and spiritually what they represent. The Logos comes, and with Him come all His gifts, graces, and influences, all that in taking our nature upon Him He purchased and procured for His own. Note especially these words in which Athanasius cites and explains the great saying of Christ:* "That which I have spoken unto you is Spirit and life," as equivalent to saying, "That which is now presented to the senses (*τὸ δεικνύμενον*), that which is now given (*διδόμενον*, being given) for the salvation of the world, is the flesh which I bear; but this flesh, and the blood which flows in it, will be given by Me spiritually"† (a word, be it observed, used by Athanasius in a special sense, equivalent to 'divinely,' by the power and work of the Godhead in Christ) "as food, so as to be spiritually, truly, and effectively, distributed" (Athanasius uses here the word *ἀναδίδοσθαι*, which has the specific meaning, diffused as food throughout the body) "in each and all, and to become a principle of conservation unto the resurrection of eternal life (*φυλακτήριον εἰς ἀνάστασιν ζωῆς αἰωνίου*)." These words are quoted by the writer of our first Homily on the Lord's supper.‡ They undoubtedly represent at once the mind of the early Church as expressed by its noblest exponents, and the mind of our own Church, faithful in this, as in all sublimest truths, to the teaching of the Fathers, of the Apostles, and of the Holy Ghost.

* Tom ii. p. 668, ed. Migne, 568, ed. Ben. † *πνευματικῶς*.
‡ p. 488.

May we take it into our own hearts, and as we approach that Holy Table where the pledges of these unspeakable blessings are offered, may we bring with us the feelings and affections which will alone enable us to become here partakers of that grace, and hereafter partakers of that resurrection unto eternal life.

## SERMON XXV.

### Hilary of Poictiers—Witness to the Unity of Doctrine and of Spiritual Life in the Early Church.

"Hearken unto Me, ye that know righteousness, in whose heart is My law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but My righteousness shall be for ever, and My salvation from generation to generation."

Isaiah li. 7, 8.

This great word of Isaiah well befits the season of Epiphany. It finds its full application in all seasons of special importance in the history of the manifestations of Christ to the Church, and most specially in seasons when those manifestations have been made amidst storms and convulsions in the sphere of spiritual life. Such a season was that which followed the establishment of Christianity as the religion of Imperial Rome. A change wholly unparalleled in the annals of mankind was then accomplished with an apparent ease and completeness which naturally filled the minds of Christians with triumphant joy. It seemed to them as though all that had been announced by the heralds of God's kingdom was about to be realized, as though the reign of the Prince of peace was already come. But the

triumph was not thus to be attained; a period of trial, if not more severe than that which preceded the conversion of Christians, yet far more subtle and formidable, immediately succeeded. The whole force of the empire, which had assumed the patronage of the new religion, was ere long engaged in a series of attempts to subvert the fundamental truths, which with one accord the churches of the East and West had set forth in the Nicene creed. Then it was that the greatest, the noblest teachers of the universal church, second only to its inspired founders, came forth, and by deed and word, by the display of fortitude, patience, zeal, and utter abnegation of self, after many an apparent discomfiture, achieved the victory, and bequeathed to all future generations of believers an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, an edifice of doctrine from which all falsehood was ejected, in which every element of truth had been thoroughly sifted and approved.

Among the men to whom a foremost place must be assigned in that achievement, special attention is attracted to one Bishop in the West, whom the great confessors of his own age, and the loftiest spirits of succeeding ages, recognized as a leader, conspicuous alike for intellectual and spiritual endowments. Most justly acknowledged as confessor and saint in the calendar of our own Church, his name is specially associated with this season, both in our universities and in our courts of law—Hilary of Poitiers. A consideration of some of the most striking points in his character and history may occupy our minds not unprofitably, nor do I doubt that you will agree with me in feeling that

they have direct bearings upon questions of special interest to ourselves.

We may first observe the process by which Hilary was brought into the Church, and prepared for the distinguished post which he at once occupied among its teachers. He belonged to an ancient Gaulish family, and his natural gifts were developed by careful culture. We have his own testimony that at a very early age he was anxiously engaged in searching into the principles on which human goodness and happiness depend. A lover of truth, he could not rest satisfied with the results of studies, which undoubtedly exercised and developed his mental powers, and made him conversant with the movements of an awakened conscience. What he did even then discern was of infinite importance. Taught partly by old thinkers, partly by influences which pervaded all schools of thought, however unconsciously, after the promulgation of the gospel, Hilary accepted with entire certitude the doctrine of the Unity of the Almighty and Eternal God. You will find this process described with singular force and beauty in the opening chapters of his great work on the Trinity, one of the most thoughtful and powerful productions of the early Church; and, before we go further, let us remark that the importance of such cultivation of the intellectual faculties was ever recognized by the greatest Fathers of the Church. It is quite true that humility and willingness to obey God's call are the primary and the sufficient qualifications for admission into the Christian Church; indeed not only into the community, but into the ranks of the ministry,

which in many parts of Christendom must to a great extent be replenished from those classes which have no special opportunities of high intellectual culture. It is quite true that a great part, a most important part, of the work assigned to the Church has ever been, and ever will be, discharged effectually by ministers in whom the moral and spiritual faculties, and those alone, have been fully developed. But in all ages, especially in ages of controversy, when the truths of religion are threatened from within and from without, when they are in conflict with false doctrines and with false philosophy, other qualities are needed. Learning at once accurate and extensive; habits of thought formed in a process of laborious study; knowledge of the world in the best sense, of the laws by which society and politics are regulated—these are all but indispensable conditions of success. The master-spirits of the Church at each great critical epoch, at such epochs as those of the last struggles with ancient heathenism, of the first struggles with intellectual heresy, of conflict between superstition and prejudice on the one side, and piety and knowledge on the other, have ever sought and used the weapons supplied by the schools of human learning, even by those most opposite in tone and tendency to the gospel of Christ. All the Fathers who speak of Hilary dwell much upon the advantages derived from his pursuits previous to his conversion. They attribute to these his eloquence, the grace and force of his style, and the judicious arrangement of his arguments. They apply to him, and to others like him, what the prophets had said touching the consecration of the riches of the

Gentiles, their wealth and their forces to the service of the sanctuary—an application in which they were forestalled by the first martyr, St. Stephen, who recognized in the man "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" an exemplar of the qualifications needed by the leader of God's hosts.

But it may here be objected, Are there not numerous passages in the writings of the Fathers expressing distrust of all learning not exclusively confined to sacred subjects? Were not infidel or heretical tendencies traced to the predominant influence of secular studies? To answer this we must carefully distinguish between two points. The question was not whether learning was capable of being abused, but whether it *was* abused; whether it was the master or the minister of the Christian teacher; whether it gave the direction to a man's thoughts, and controlled his principles, or was employed solely with a view to the efficient setting forth and defence of truths derived from the Book of life, and resting exclusively on the authority of Christ. What the Fathers of that age did say, what they said with perfect truth, was that all the heretical schools were not merely impregnated with heathen learning, but that they were under the controlling influence of heathen principles. The mysticism of the East, with which the Church was brought into early contact, produced the multiform but substantially identical errors of Gnosticism; nor can any man at all conversant with the history of Arianism doubt that one and all the maintainers of that doctrine were unduly influenced by the great leaders of Hellenic thought. The Fathers were

quite right who saw in that system but a subtle form of the old Polytheism, remoulded in the schools of Greece, more especially in Alexandrian Platonism, but essentially unchanged. But when learning and mental powers and the resources of science were subordinated to one supreme truth, they were ever welcomed, they were duly appreciated, if not by the uneducated members of the Church, yet by those who were in fact the true representatives of Him in Whom "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." The very style of the Greek Fathers of that age bears witness to their perfect mastery of the varied and extensive learning of their heathen countrymen. The works of Clement, of Origen, of Dionysius and Didymus, are repertories of secular knowledge; nor can a scholar fresh from the study of the masterpieces of Attic genius turn to the pages of Basil, of Gregory Nazianzen, or the brother of Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, without being struck by the indications of intimate familiarity with the writings of orators, historians, above all, of philosophers, nay, even with the lyrical and dramatic literature of Greece. Learning deep, extensive, accurate, mental training at once severe and complete, bringing into full play all the energies of the human spirit, are the true qualifications which the Church has ever needed in those who occupy the foremost place in her struggles against the powers and principalities of darkness—qualifications capable indeed of being abused, and when abused fatal to a man's spiritual life, but indispensable to the full exposition and effectual defence of Christian truth.

To return to Hilary. Very soon after his declaration

of adhesion to the cause of Christ (about A.D. 370) he was appointed to the Bishopric of his native city. One fact connected with his appointment strikes the learned editor of his works, a Benedictine of St. Maur, and it strikes the Anglican reader also, as important, though in a very different light. Hilary was a married man; his wife was living and continued to live with him in his episcopate; and in a letter addressed to their daughter, Abrah, he shows how thoroughly both parents understood and discharged the common duties of that relationship. Well would it have been for the Church had that been a general custom, founded as it was on express declarations of Holy Writ, in accordance with the spirit and practice of the apostolic age, and accepted for a time by Christian churches both in East and West. Take for instance the case of the father of Gregory Nazianzen, and Gregory of Nyssa himself. The family life, the very centre and home of Christian morality, might have been raised to its highest development, and Christians have found in their bishops and priests true and complete exemplars, such as they were intended to be by St. Paul when he lays down the conditions of the episcopate. Such was not the good fortune of the Church; during many ages it forfeited that advantage. Partly owing to internal causes, for which it was responsible, partly to external causes, the effects of which we may regret but cannot condemn, episcopal, and in the West priestly, celibacy very soon became the absolute and universal rule. The internal cause was the growth of an error, having no countenance in Holy Scripture, which associated all spirituality with an entire renunciation of

natural enjoyments, a point which I here mention because Hilary himself, probably moved by the influence of ascetics during his exile in Phrygia, was seriously affected by the error. The external course, for which the Church is not responsible, was the continuance of cruel persecutions, which brought every Christian Bishop who maintained the purity and integrity of the faith into daily peril of confiscation and exile. The emperor felt himself powerless when he had to deal with men who, like St. Basil, could say truly they had nought to fear; poorer they could not be made than they had voluntarily made themselves; sufferings he could not inflict which could be cared for by a body dead to the flesh, or which would not be welcomed for Christ's sake; home and family could not be torn from him whose only home, whose only family, was the Church of Christ, militant on earth and triumphant in heaven. Yet even here the example of Hilary shows that on the whole the Church might have been wiser had she accepted the conditions, and at least left every bishop and priest free to act as conscience and affection might lead him. We admire a Basil, we share his triumph over the discomfiture of the Arian emperor Valens; but we feel that a still higher meed of praise is due to one like Hilary, who had the choice, on the one hand, between courtly favour and—held out to him as a special inducement—the foremost position among the prelates of Gaul, together with a home supplied with all the requisites of outward and inward enjoyment; and on the other hand, poverty, exile, bodily suffering, mental anxiety, and, so far as could be foreseen,

life-long wanderings; and who having that choice did not hesitate one moment, but took up his Master's cross, and, like the first martyrs, sacrificed all for that Master's sake. In both the points I have thus brought before you you can scarcely have failed to recall with peculiar satisfaction the accordance of what has been said of Hilary with the feelings and practices of the best examples of English Churchmanship. Learning of all kinds—the learning which is conversant with all that man has done, or thought, or felt, with the history, the philosophy, the literature, the languages of all races and all ages, the learning which investigates the phenomena of the outward universe—has ever been recognized among ourselves as indispensable to the full development of man's highest energies. Our greatest divines have been men eminent in one or more fields of lofty thought. Ours has hitherto been a learned Church, a learning fostered by institutions which are often menaced, but destined, as we trust, to survive all attacks; a learning, however, which has flourished and produced some of its greatest triumphs when spoliation had done its worst. Nor can we but remember that by no men were the claims of family life, the tenderest and deepest affections of humanity, advocated more strenuously, or exhibited more beautifully, than by those heroes of the Reformation, who surrendered without a murmur all that in this world men prize, and justly prize, most dearly, offering themselves to the scaffold and the flames, willing victims for the cross of Christ.

There is one other point in Hilary's character which you will certainly think deserving of special admi-

ration. No one, of course, questions his soundness in the faith; his entire orthodoxy is recognized as above suspicion. It is a fact of importance as bearing upon common assumptions touching the progress of Christian doctrine, that although Hilary, living in the west of Gaul, had for some years little knowledge of what was going on in the East of the empire, and knew nothing even of the controversies at the Nicene Council, yet his teaching was so entirely in accordance with the creed then set forth that it needed no modification whatever in substance or in form—a testimony, were testimony needed, decisive as to whether the Arians or Athanasius were the innovators. Hilary, like all the representatives of the Church, whether summoned to the Council or abiding in their provincial homes, at once repudiated the statements of the Arians as unscriptural and blasphemous, and accepted the Creed of Nicæa as expressing concisely and unmistakably the truth which they had always maintained. As I said, Hilary stands out from first to last as an uncompromising maintainer of that truth; for the sake of that truth he was content to pass his best years of life in exile, and, as men deemed it, in disgrace. But now mark this. That firmness was combined with a candour seldom paralleled. He was quite able, most willing, to recognize a substantial unity of spirit in those who differed from him very widely, who actually prepared or subscribed forms which countenanced, or seemed by admission to countenance, Arian error. He was able, and most willing, to admit the distinction between those who were consciously and deliberately opposed to the fundamental truth of the

Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, and those who found a difficulty in understanding or accepting a term (ὁμοούσιος) hitherto but partially known to Christians. In this Hilary had indeed a high authority, the very highest authority of that time, Athanasius (p. 276) himself, who was quite aware, and often stated, that many who believed that they were opposed to him really held the same truth, merely differing as to the form of expression; and within the same century the same line was taken by Basil and the two Gregories. But Hilary did more. He wrote a treatise on the Synods which had been convened at frequent intervals for the express purpose of drawing up new forms of faith which might be substituted for the Nicene. Now what course did he follow? No man saw more clearly than he did the mischief which would be done were any such attempt to be successful; none were more fully aware of the motives which instigated those by whom the councils were convened. But this he saw also: the great majority of those who attended and even subscribed the decrees did it in simplicity and good faith; and, to use the words of Tillemont, one of the fairest and most learned of Church historians; "in the treatise on those synods Hilary evinces the moderation and sweetness of spirit which are recognized as his characteristics, and explains every expression in the best sense it can bear," and, as I will add, he shows that in every sincere believer, however ill-informed or prejudiced in controversial questions, he can discern and appreciate a substantial acknowledgment of Christ's truth. Liberality is a word ever on men's lips, but not

so frequently used with a true appreciation of its meaning. It is applied to men indifferent to all truth, who are consequently little tempted to angry feelings when any truth is oppugned or misrepresented; it is applied, strangely enough, to those who have the bitterest feelings of animosity against any who maintain the Christian faith, nay, who maintain any essential portion of the faith. But true liberality is that described by the apostle as the "wisdom which cometh from above, which is first pure, then peaceable;" which holds firmly the truth on which the moral and spiritual well-being of man depends, but at the same time refrains from all uncharitable aspersions against those who oppose it, and thankfully accepts every indication that an opponent really loves any portion of the truth, and is only withheld from maintaining it in its completeness by hindrances known to Him Who searches the heart of man.

Such are the points which appear to me specially noticeable in the character of Hilary. With regard to the first point—intellectual culture, no difference of opinion can exist among us. Yet it should be kept in mind that unless the absolute necessity for sound and extensive learning in the clergy be recognized by laymen, there is considerable danger lest institutions specially calculated to maintain it be swept away, or disastrously mutilated by the advocates of one-sided utilitarianism, seconded by the opponents of revelation, and but weakly resisted by those who hold the expediency of concession to what is supposed to be the spirit of the age. With regard to the second point, I

trust we shall never forget that condemnation of ascetic principles should ever be modified by due allowance for the position and motives of their early advocates in the Church, and that censure can only be justified by a practical exemplification of a higher and more spiritual life, in accordance with the laws of nature and the principles of Christianity. A Christian household, one in which all relationships are pure, all duties towards God and man faithfully discharged, a home in which the hearts of children are prepared for their work in time and their state in eternity, may be triumphantly held up in contrast to the monastic life, which however, with all its evils, is incomparably superior to that of the sensualist and idler. And lastly, as to candour, what shall we say but this? Rightly understood, combined with steadfast adherence to essential truths, those truths on which all moral principles rest, from which all moral sanctions are derived, candour is a special exemplification of the grace of graces, the charity which St. Paul extols in burning words, which St. John makes a primary condition of acceptance, which our Lord Himself sets forth from first to last as the characteristic of His true followers. In what direction, however, are we most likely to fail? Is it in judging leniently those without? Is it in finding excuses for those who assail our faith, to whom the very name of God, of Christ, is a stumbling-block? I leave it for you to answer whether men of intelligence and large hearts among us do fail in that direction. Is it not rather in the other direction? Do not most of us need more of the spirit of candour in judging those of old who lived and died for

Christ? True candour would not look through the annals of Christ's Church, would not scrutinize the conduct of fellow-Christians in circumstances less favourable than our own to calm and sound judgment, with the desire of detecting and exposing deficiencies. True candour will learn far other lessons from contemplating the character of great and holy men—whether those whom Holy Scripture sets before us as objects of reverence, or those in whom the Church at various ages has recognized the representatives of spiritual life—saintly heroes with all their weaknesses or shortcomings, men who "feared not the reproach of men, nor were afraid of their revilings," who knew righteousness, who had God's love in their hearts, and who trusted implicitly in that promise, of which assuredly we now witness the fulfilment, "My righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation."

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